LexisNexis®

# [*DeSantis says he will sign law to ban adding fluoride to tap water in Florida*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6FRP-4653-RV92-V53T-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

May 6, 2025 Tuesday

Copyright 2025 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** state\_politics

**Length:** 712 words

**Byline:**  Douglas Hanks

Miami Herald

**Body**

Recalling his fight against ***COVID*** masks and ***vaccine*** mandates, Gov. Ron DeSantis came to Miami on Monday to announce that he plans to sign legislation banning the addition of fluoride to tap water statewide.

"It's forced medication when they're jamming fluoride into your water supply," DeSantis said at a press conference hours after Miami-Dade commissioners voted to end the county's fluoridation program. "Why should this be forced on people?"

DeSantis said he'll sign Florida Senate Bill 700 -- agricultural legislation that includes the fluoridation ban -- once he formally receives it from the legislature. The legislation will take effect July 1 and force local governments to halt adding fluoride in drinking water -- ending an oral-health program that's in place for about 70% of Florida's residents, according to a state estimate.

The bill passed on April 29 in the middle of Miami-Dade's own fight over fluoridation of tap water, which the county has been doing since the 1950s as a way to reduce cavities and other dental issues.

Once enacted, the ban signed by DeSantis would make Florida the second state after Utah to outlaw the addition of fluoride to drinking water, a practice the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention called one of the great public-health achievements of the 20th century.

While some researchers have linked cognitive issues in children with fluoride consumption by their mothers during pregnancy, large medical groups reject those findings and call tiny amounts of fluoride in tap water both safe and a boon to dental health.

But the pro-fluoride view is losing political clout. Robert F. Kennedy Jr., President Donald Trump's health secretary, wants it removed from drinking supplies.

After a direct appeal from the governor's surgeon general, Dr. Joseph Ladapo, Miami-Dade commissioners on April 1 voted to end the regular addition of fluoride into county tap water. Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** vetoed the item on April 11, and commissioners voted 8-4 to overturn her veto on Tuesday morning.

DeSantis scheduled his Miami appearance on the same day as the override vote and invited the Miami-Dade legislation's sponsor, Commissioner Roberto Gonzalez, to join him at a lectern with a "Free State of Florida" message attached.

MIA\_06DESANTISFLUORIDEPRESSGov. Ron DeSantis breaks into laughter during remarks by Florida Department of Health Surgeon General Dr. Joseph Ladapo at a press conference in Miami inside the Rhode Building on Tuesday, May 6, 2025.

"I thought we learned our lesson with ***COVID***," said Gonzalez, who first joined the commission in 2022 as a DeSantis appointee and won a four-year term last year. "I thought we weren't going to make those mistakes anymore. But sometimes people just won't let things go."

During the event, DeSantis promised to sign another bill that critics say is based on fringe science. The legislation targets alleged weather modification efforts and other concerns related to chemicals added to the atmosphere through aircraft.

Part of the concern stems from citizen suspicions about vapor trails left by jets -- known as "chemtrails" to some and just a normal part of aircraft exhaust to experts trying to debunk the worries.

The sponsor of Florida Senate Bill 56, Sen. Ileana Garcia, a Miami-Dade Republican, said her legislation will create an outlet for people to report concerns about what they see in the sky and then allow the state government to follow up on the complaint. "Let's track, investigate and mitigate," Garcia said at the event.

During her speech, Garcia introduced a high-profile supporter of her legislation: Marla Maples, an ex-wife of Trump. Maples sat in the front row of the event but didn't speak. She has posted on social media about jets' "chemtrails" appearing in the sky and "dimming the sun and leaving a heavy haze over the ocean."

DeSantis said there's no evidence of weather modification happening in Florida, but he described the legislation as a way to block any future efforts linked to combating climate change.

"There are movements -- private businesses -- and their view is we can save you from global warming by injecting different things into the atmosphere," he said. "And that is not something we're going to do in Florida. ... We're the Sunshine State."

**Load-Date:** May 7, 2025

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*A Miami hospital leader just got a $242,000 raise. How does the salary compare?*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6FKG-NF83-RRHS-P445-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

April 17, 2025 Thursday

Copyright 2025 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** health\_care

**Length:** 1758 words

**Byline:**  Michelle Marchante

Miami Herald

**Body**

The chief of Miami-Dade County's public hospital system just got a big raise.

Carlos Migoya makes more than mayors, city managers, police chiefs and school superintendents. But he's not the highest paid health executive in the nation, or even in South Florida.

What does Migoya's paycheck look like?

After a $242,054 boost in salary, a nearly 21% raise, Migoya is pulling in about $1.4 million a year at the nonprofit Jackson Health, one of the largest public hospital systems in the nation.

The 74-year-old CEO, who has been with Jackson 15 years, has big plans for the health system. But he's also thinking about retirement.

"I never thought I'd be here this long," he said during a Zoom interview with the Miami Herald, noting that the Jackson CEO position has now been his second longest job. "Ever since I got here, my number one job was always to find the right replacement for me."

Although Migoya hasn't decided on when he will retire, he has a possible successor in mind: David Zambrana, Jackson Health System's president and chief operating officer, who has worked alongside him for years.

Zambrana, a registered nurse and doctor of nursing practice, began his health career at Jackson Memorial working in cardiac surgery intensive care, trauma and pediatric intensive care. He came back to Jackson in 2016, when he left his job as chief executive at the neighboring University of Miami Hospital for the same job at Jackson Memorial Hospital. He is now Jackson's chief operating officer.

Screenshot 2025-04-10 183213\_fitted (1).pngDavid Zambrana, Jackson's president and chief operating officer

Migoya won't be the one to decide Jackson's next CEO. That task will fall to the seven-member Public Health Trust, the board that just gave Migoya a pay raise. But Zambrana "would have not only my support but my complete recommendation that he would be the first to eventually take over" Jackson, the CEO said.

"You want to make sure you leave at the right time and I don't know what that is right now. A lot of challenges are ahead," Migoya said. "We will make that decision at the right time and I don't know when that is."

Comparing hospital salaries of the bosses

Migoya's raise is part of a new two-year contract with the governing body that oversees Miami-Dade's public hospital system. Its meant to make his salary more competitive with other CEOs that run not-for-profit health organizations similar in size and complexity to Jackson. Migoya's salary, like all Jackson employees, is accounted for in the hospital system's operating budget, which comes from patient revenue, taxes and philanthropy.

So how does Migoya's salary compare to other hospital executives?

Under the new contract, Migoya's total compensation package would be the sixth highest of 21 public health systems with revenues greater than $1 billion, Michelle Kligman, Jackson's executive vice president and chief human resources officer, told the board in February.

With his raise, Migoya's base pay is similar to other South Florida hospital CEOs. But his total compensation -- salary combined with benefits that will bring him to at least $1.74 million in 2025 -- is less than other hospital leaders.

That's not unusual. Nonprofit hospitals and private for-profit hospital systems typically pay their top executives more than taxpayer-funded public hospital systems like Jackson. News reports and tax documents give an idea how much money they make.

CEO Compensation DataWrapper

Migoya's total compensation is more than that of Shane Strum, who oversees Broward's two public hospital systems and is the only other public hospital CEO in South Florida. Both make less than other South Florida executives who run not-for-profit health systems, including Baptist Health South Florida, Mount Sinai Medical Center in Miami Beach, Cleveland Clinic Florida and the University of Miami Health System.

The highest paid South Florida hospital CEO in total compensation is Albert "Bo" Boulenger, the president and CEO of Baptist Health South Florida, the largest not-for-profit hospital system in the region and the future teaching hospital of Florida International University.

Boulenger, who became Baptist Health's CEO in October 2022, received a total compensation of about $3.05 million during the 2022 fiscal year, which ran from June 2022 through September 2023, according to the most recently filed tax documents with the IRS. He was promoted to the CEO job after Baptist Health's longtime leader Brian Keeley retired. Keeley, who had been CEO since 1986 and then became a trustee member, received a total compensation of about $4.88 million during the same time period.

Joseph Echevarria, president and CEO of the University of Miami and the University of Miami Health System, received a total compensation of about $1.84 million during the 2022 fiscal year, which ran from June 2022 to May 2023, according to most recent IRS tax documents. Echevarria's UHealth CEO role was expanded during this time to include the university. He became UM's interim president, and later permanent president, last year. Dr. Dipen Parekh, professor at UM's Miller School of Medicine and UHealth's chief operating officer, who oversees UHealth's day-to-day operations, reported a higher total compensation of about $3.44 million.

Gino Santorio, the president and CEO of Mount Sinai, received about $1.93 million in total compensation in 2023, according to ProPublica's Nonprofit Explorer, which collects tax documents filed with the IRS.

Dr. Conor Delaney, executive vice president and president of the Cleveland Clinic Florida market, oversees the health system's operations across the state, including Cleveland Clinic Weston and four other hospitals. He received about $1.76 million in total compensation in 2023, recent IRS tax filings show.

Strum is president and CEO of Broward Health and also serves as the interim CEO of Memorial Healthcare System, two of the largest public hospital systems in the country. Strum makes about $1.3 million annually for his job at Broward Health and declined a salary for Memorial, according to news reports. The Herald could not confirm the salary and benefits breakdown of his compensation and has filed a public record request for his contract.

Salary information was not publicly available for the South Florida executives of for-profit health systems HCA Florida Healthcare, which owns several hospitals across the region, and Healthcare Systems of America, which took over Palmetto General Hospital in Hialeah, North Shore Medical Center in North Miami-Dade, Coral Gables Hospital, Hialeah Hospital and Florida Medical Center in Lauderdale Lakes from struggling Steward Health Care System last year.

Carlos Migoya's role at Jackson Health

Migoya oversees Miami-Dade County's healthcare safety net, which provides care to everyone, even if they can't pay and don't have insurance. Jackson has seven hospitals, two nursing homes, a renowned transplant center, and several urgent cares, doctors' offices and clinics across Miami-Dade.

Besides being one of the largest public health systems in the nation, with more than 14,800 full-time employees, Jackson also serves as a teaching hospital through a partnership with the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine. The taxpayer-funded public hospital was ground zero of Miami-Dade's ***COVID***-19 pandemic. As the hospital CEO, Migoya also serves on the executive committee of the Jackson Health Foundation, the fundraising arm of Jackson.

While he may be thinking of some R&R, for now Migoya is focusing on working with the team he has built through the years to "drive Jackson to the levels of competition that we need to be at to be able to be a thriving and sustainable system for Miami-Dade County."

MIA\_Pfizer\_***Vaccine***\_Jackson\_ (19)Jackson Health CEO Carlos Migoya, left, and Miami-Dade Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** attend a press conference outside of Jackson Memorial Hospital in Miami, Florida, on Tuesday, Dec. 15, 2020. The conference was held after Jackson Memorial Hospital administered doses of Pfizer-BioNTech ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** to its healthcare workers.

Migoya, a retired banker with decades of experience in the banking industry, including serving as regional president of Wachovia in North Carolina and the CEO for the Atlantic region, was hired in 2011 to help steady the financially wobbly Jackson.

He also had a bit of public service experience, although at a much lower salary. Before coming to Jackson, Migoya worked for $1 a year as Miami city manager in 2010 "when bloated union contracts threatened to drown the municipal ledgers in red ink," as the Miami Herald reported at the time.

In his first year as Jackson CEO, the hospital system produced a surplus of more than $8 million, its first since 2006. Jackson has since earned an annual surplus every year, including last year when it faced one of its toughest financial hurdles in over a decade.

A breakdown of Migoya's Jackson Health compensation

In his evaluation, board members commended Migoya for his leadership and vision of growth. In the anonymous evaluations, which the Miami Herald obtained through a public record request, one board member described the CEO as "one of the premier relationship builders in Miami-Dade County." Another said he was "an extraordinary CEO who has dedicated the last decade of his mind and heart to Jackson."

Migoya's pay bump is based on the salary recommendations made by the consulting firm Gallagher, which conducted a hospital CEO compensation analysis for Jackson in November.

Under the new contract:

Migoya will now make a base salary of $1.4 million. In February 2026, he'll get a 3% raise, bringing it up to $1.44 million. The new contract runs through June 17, 2027.

He'll also receive $340,897 worth of annual benefits.

The CEO may also be eligible for an annual performance bonus based on how well Jackson does financially each fiscal year.

Migoya's total compensation, salary plus benefits, for 2025 will be at least $1.74 million and at least $1.78 million in 2026, not counting bonuses.

Migoya said that his desire to continue leading the health system comes from loyalty to his team and what Jackson "means to this community."

He's excited for Jackson's future plans that include building one of the largest ERs in the nation and the construction of affordable workforce housing for employees, and expansion of outpatient services.

"There's a lot of people that are not only alive," he said, "but have quality of life because of the work that's done at Jackson."

**Load-Date:** April 17, 2025

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Miami-Dade mayor should veto the fluoridation vote | Opinion*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6FHV-6PH3-RRYT-6022-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

April 9, 2025 Wednesday

Copyright 2025 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** editorials

**Length:** 738 words

**Byline:**  the Miami Herald Editorial Board

Miami Herald

**Body**

The fluoride wars that have been raging in Florida for months recently reached Miami-Dade County. Now Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava***, who has said she supports keeping fluoride in water, must decide by Friday whether she'll veto an 8-2 county commission vote on April 1 to end the decades-long practice of adding fluoride to the water to improve dental health.

Vetoes should be used sparingly. In this case, a veto is appropriate.

As we have said before, the scientific consensus remains that tiny amounts of fluoride in drinking water is both safe and helpful to dental health. The American Academy of Pediatrics says it helps reduce tooth decay and lessens cavities in children. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention called it one of the greatest achievements in public health in the 20th century, and says added fluoride continues to show no risk in the tiny amounts used in drinking water.

Miami-Dade adds 0.7 milligrams per liter, the CDC's recommended amount. Concerns cited by opponents often focus on studies looking at much higher amounts, of 1.5 milligrams per liter or more. Miami-Dade has fluoridated its water since the 1950s. As Dr. Aileen Marty, a professor at Florida International University's medical school, said during a hearing in Miami-Dade: "I want to be very clear that the levels that are in Miami-Dade County's water are safe. Not only are they safe... they're necessary for the health and well-being of the children and adults in this county."

Removing fluoride from our drinking water is likely to penalize families of limited income the most, those without easy and affordable access to dental care. And make no mistake: Dental care is health care. Poor oral health can lead to serious health issues like heart disease and diabetes.

The debate over fluoridation grew after a federal judge in September ordered the Environmental Protection Agency to further address regulating it. The ruling came out of a report by the National Institutes of Health that indicated a link between high exposures -- double the standard amount -- and developmental delay in kids.

In Miami-Dade, some of those opposed to fluoride have echoed the national discussion, likening its addition to the public water supply to forced medical treatments. Rejecting fluoride would be a victory for medical freedom, they said.

Unfortunately, this has become a political issue. Mistrust of public health systems reared its head during the ***COVID*** pandemic. And Robert Kennedy Jr., the secretary of health and human services under President Trump, claims fluoride can lead to health problems. On Tuesday, he said he plans to tell the CDC to stop recommending fluoridation, and that he is assembling a task force on the issue.

But how much value should anyone give Kennedy's medical opinion? He's been a years-long ***vaccine*** skeptic, yet on Sunday, after visiting Texas families who lost children to measles, he publicly advocated on X for the MMR ***vaccine***.

The fluoride issue arose in Miami-Dade when Commissioner Roberto Gonzalez sponsored legislation to remove it from the water. He held a March 11 hearing when Florida Surgeon General Joseph Ladapo and other fluoridation critics spoke. The commission voted April 1; Ladapo was allowed to address them again right before the meeting. On Monday, Levine Cava held a roundtable discussion with pro-fluoride medical professionals, the first time advocates had been allowed extended time to address the issue in County Hall. Commissioners were not invited.

There have been mixed decisions in local governments across Florida. Collier County voted to stop fluoridating water in February; Seminole County did the same this week. But the Central Florida town of Bartow voted to keep fluoride. So did Delray Beach in Palm Beach County. There's also a Florida Senate bill being considered by the Legislature, SB 700, to ban fluoride in the water supply.

Even if Levine Cava vetoes the legislation, commissioners could override her decision with nine of the commission's 13 votes. Because there were three commissioners absent during the April 1 vote to remove fluoride from the water supply in 30 days, it's unclear whether there would be enough votes to do so.

Miami-Dade commissioners ignored much of the scientific consensus on fluoride. With a veto, Levine Cava could bring it back to the county.

letter V4.pngSend a letter to the editor to [*heralded@miamiherald.com*](mailto:heralded@miamiherald.com)

Click here to send the letter.

**Load-Date:** April 9, 2025

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*What does airport travel in Florida and Miami look like since COVID? See the changes*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CG1-FNF1-DYJM-M54G-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

July 12, 2024 Friday

Copyright 2024 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** travel

**Length:** 1198 words

**Byline:**  Devon Milley, Vinod Sreeharsha and Michelle Marchante

Miami Herald

**Body**

Editor's note: This story and visualization are part of our new "Data In Your Life" series, in which we mine public databases to tell quick stories about the world around us.

Record numbers of travelers are passing through American airports. Europe has more American tourists than ever, even in Serbia. The number of people taking cruises reached an all-time high for two straight years, a boon to Miami and Fort Lauderdale.

The worst days and months of ***COVID***-19 forced people indoors and uprooted lives. It also complicated travel worldwide.

Today, more Americans are taking to the skies. In 2023, airport traffic in Florida was up 10% compared to 2019. Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas said in a statement that he expects record-breaking travel to continue in the coming months.

The U.S. Department of Transportation publishes data on the number of passengers flying to or from a given airport. The chart below shows the number of passengers who flew to or from a Florida airport from 2019 to 2023.

florida airport traffic

Florida is one of 25 states that has returned to pre-pandemic levels of air travel.

national airport traffic percent change map

The state has come a long way. In 2020 in Florida, airport traffic dropped almost 55% versus 2019 amid massive uncertainty.

In the U.S., states ordered lockdowns, sending kids home from school, closing "non-essential" businesses and telling people to stay home to reduce the disease spread. Cruise ships were not allowed to sail. And travel bans were issued for non-U.S. citizens from select countries due to ***COVID***.

Complicated travel

As the world began to reopen, the way people travel changed. Every country had its own ***COVID*** rules for entering, including testing, masks, ***vaccine*** and quarantine procedures.

And as the ***COVID*** risk changed, so did the testing and quarantine rules, making it challenging, and sometimes confusing, for travelers planning a trip.

READ MORE: Digital ***vaccine*** passports? Testing requirements? What the future of travel looks like

Many countries required proof of a negative ***COVID*** test or proof of ***COVID*** vaccination for entry. In the U.S., while vaccines were never required for domestic traveling, there were testing and ***vaccine*** rules for international travelers.

Masks were required on planes. And many American airports, including in Miami and Fort Lauderdale, opened ***COVID*** test sites to help make testing easier and more accessible to travelers.

Resurgence in Miami

MIA\_110TSAMIA20NEWPPP.JPGTravelers enter checkpoint 5 at the Miami airport. The TSA announced that they are ready to deal with the increase of travelers flying in and out of MIA during the Christmas and New Year's holidays. Wednesday December 20, 2023.

Emblematic of the travel recovery in Florida is Miami International Airport. In 2023, MIA set a new record in traffic with 52.3 million passengers. That was a 3.2% increase over the 2022 figure of 50.7 million people, which at that time was an all-time high.

The growth was driven by international passengers, which jumped by 8.5% to 23.2 million.

Domestic travel at the Miami airport in 2023 was 29.1 million, down by 0.5% from the prior year. Still, that number exceeded the 23.5 million visitors from within the U.S. that used the region's largest airport in 2019.

A major reason for that is through 2022, many American tech and finance professionals moved to South Florida from New York, California and elsewhere. They were drawn by the state and region's decisions to open up from ***COVID***-19 faster than their home states. And they started investing or building companies in the Magic City. Hedge funds, venture capitalists, and entrepreneurs set up shop in Miami.

Miami International Airport's overall growth was largely driven by American Airlines, its main carrier. The carrier had an all-time 380 peak-day flights in 2023. Delta had a record 38 peak-day departures to 13 destinations from MIA

But new discount airlines like Norse Atlantic Airways and Porter Airlines also started flying into Miami last year. In March, German low-cost airline Condor Airlines started non-stop flights between Frankfurt and Miami. Air Serbia is in talks to start a nonstop direct flight between Miami and Belgrade later this year.

Reflective of the region's drive to travel more, Miami International Airport has posted records on major holidays such as the recent Fourth of July.

AAA estimated that over the recent Fourth of July, 4.5 million Floridians traveled 50 miles or more away from their home, 7% more than in 2023 and a new record. In AAA's ranking of most sought after destinations based on its booking data, Miami ranked fifth and Fort Lauderdale seventh.

In a report, the group wrote that, "despite concerns about inflation, total travel is increasing on growth in consumer confidence, wages, and continued strength in consumer spending."

New flights at Miami airport

MIA\_112TSAMIA20NEWPPP.JPGTravelers at MIA on Wednesday December 20, 2023.

In June, Emirates, a flagship carrier of the United Arab Emirates, started a daily flight between Miami and Bogotá. It's a continuation of the Dubai-Miami route and meant to better connect Colombia with the Gulf countries. Airline officials returned to Miami in July to recruit flight crews. The wide-body, three-class Boeing 777-300 ER aircraft has 354 seats across three cabins.

The new service nearly by itself increased the number of flights between Miami and Bogotá in June to 298, 18% more than June 2023, according to data from Cirium, an aviation analytics company.

Last year, LATAM added a new daily flight from Miami to Medellin. American Airlines also has dozens of flights between Miami and Colombia.

Avianca, which dates back to 1919, has about 62 weekly flights between Miami and Latin America. On July 1, it added business class to its daily flights between Miami and Bogotá.

MIA's growth has come with growing pains. Complaints about the state of the Miami airport have gotten so bad that Miami-Dade County Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** recently held a news briefing there about the issues.

Passengers have complained about broken elevators and escalators. Last September, Skytrain shut down. The system, which provides an alternative to long walks in Concourse D, American Airlines' home, is not yet completely up and running.

Changes at Fort Lauderdale airport

MIA\_tfl-l-fll-airport-terminal-5-3.JPGBroward County officials and other dignitaries gathered for the terminal groundbreaking ceremony at Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport on Monday, Oct. 9, 2023. (Carline Jean/South Florida Sun Sentinel)

In South Florida, Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport also saw growth, with about 35 million travelers in 2023, a 10% increase from 31.7 million in 2022.

While that figure is still below its 2019 mark of 36.7 million travelers, FLL expects to surpass it in 2025.

One reason for the expected growth is that the airport is near Port Everglades, one of the country's biggest seaports for cruise passengers. Last year, the port started a minimum 15-year agreement with Disney Cruises Lines.

It also started work last October on building a $404 million, fifth airline terminal that will add five passenger gates.

**Load-Date:** July 12, 2024

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Miami-Dade's police director's shooting, DeSantis' bad week, and more slavery fall out*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68V0-84W1-JC3J-X1Y9-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

July 31, 2023 Monday

Copyright 2023 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** politics\_policy\_in\_sunshine\_state

**Length:** 3188 words

**Byline:**  Mary Ellen Klas

Newsletters |

**Body**

It's Monday, July 31, and as the election-year landscape was upended last week in Miami-Dade County, questions continue to surround Gov. Ron DeSantis about whether he can sustain his campaign for the 2024 GOP nomination.

WHAT WE'RE TALKING ABOUT

Purge and promises: The week began for the Florida governor with a car crash on the way to a fundraiser in Tennessee on Monday and a second campaign staff purge announced on Tuesday. The developments included the firing of former National Review writer Nate Hochman over a video that featured a Nazi symbol, and DeSantis forced to explain himself after telling a conservative podcaster that he would consider appointing conspiracy-theorist, Democrat and prominent anti-vaxxer Robert F. Kennedy Jr. to either the CDC or the FDA.

USATSI\_20789529.jpgFlorida Gov. Ron DeSantis greets audience members during a campaign event in Clive, Iowa, on May 30.

Same talking points: The governor also spent Thursday and Friday barnstorming through Iowa with six events in two days and, despite the high-profile promise of a campaign reboot, DeSantis stuck to familiar talking points during a speech to a prominent gathering of Iowa Republicans on Friday.

Protesters on Cape Cod: By Saturday, DeSantis was greeted by protesters when he arrived for a private fundraiser in the Cape Cod town of Cotuit, Mass., according to the Cape Cod Times. The crowds gathered on the streets and beaches chanting, "Shame," and held signs protesting the Florida governor's policies. A day earlier, Cape and Islands District Attorney Rob Galibois said he would investigate the DeSantis administration's decision to transport nearly 50 Venezuelan asylum seekers from Texas to nearby Martha's Vineyard last year with false promises of jobs and housing.

Economic plan launch: DeSantis will hold a press conference Monday in Rochester, New Hampshire, to announce what he's calling his "Declaration of Economic Independence." He'll do an interview with Fox News in the evening with host Bret Baier.

Tim Scott gaining ground: DeSantis has built his campaign on the notion that the fight for the Republican nomination is essentially a two-man race between him and former President Donald Trump. But new polls out of Iowa are now showing Sen.Tim Scott of South Carolina gaining ground on the governor. When Scott criticized DeSantis over the state's new standards for African American history, DeSantis snapped back, calling it a "false accusation."

Jeb BushPresidential candidate Jeb Bush smiles for selfies with supportets at Chico's Cuban Restaurant in Hialeah on Monday Dec. 28, 2015 on his first leg of many campaign stops in Florida.

Comparisons to Jeb: The declining poll numbers, angst about campaign overspending, and a summer slump has drawn the inevitable comparisons to the 2016 presidential campaign of former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush. Both Bush and DeSantis were twice elected governor of the swing state and both entered the race with lots of cash and buzz only to watch Donald Trump control the narrative, increase his support among the GOP base, and send the campaigns into a tailspin.

Punishing companies for political views: As part of his quest to gain more earned media, DeSantis has begun to do more interviews. Last week, he sat down with former Fox News host and podcaster Megyn Kelly, who grilled him about his attacks on Disney and Anheuser-Busch.

Kelly asked: Isn't DeSantis doing what conservatives accuse the left of doing, "using government to punish citizens for political wrong-think?" DeSantis defended the effort to sue Anheuser-Busch for losses to the state employee retirement fund (after its stock dropped in the wake of a boycott sought by conservatives who opposed the company's use of a trans woman in an online ad. ) "Didn't you support the boycott against them?" Kelly asked DeSantis. "I did. But that's just a personal thing,'' he replied.

USATSI\_20145949.jpgFormer President Donald J. Trump arrives before speaking at the Conservative Political Action Conference, CPAC 2023, at the Gaylord National Resort & Convention Center at National Harbor, Maryland, on March 4, 2023.

Trump's conflicting calendar: Trump may be leading the pack, but the Republican primary calendar is set to run headfirst into the former president's legal realities. On Jan. 15, the same day the Iowa caucuses kick off the Republican presidential primary, a civil trial is scheduled to begin in New York accusing Trump of defamation against a woman accusing him of rape. The next day, in South Florida, a federal judge will consider whether to admit classified material into a criminal trial that could put him behind bars.

WHAT WE'RE WATCHING

MIA\_007MDPNEWDIRECTORDS.JPGMiami-Dade County Police Director Alfredo "Freddy" Ramirez is recovering in a Tampa hospital from a self-inflicted gunshot wound on Sunday evening. This photo is from the press conference introducing him as the new director at Miami-Dade Police Department Headquarters on January 8, 2020 in Miami.

Police director in stable condition: Miami-Dade County's police director Alfredo "Freddy" Ramirez, was in stable condition after shooting himself in the head on the side of a Florida highway July 21, following an apparent domestic dispute that forced his departure from a Tampa hotel where he and his wife were attending a law enforcement convention, according to multiple police sources and reports.

Interim named: Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** named Stephanie V. Daniels as interim director for the Miami-Dade Police Department and JD Patterson as interim chief of public safety. Ramirez, 52, holds both job titles, and was expected to be a Democratic candidate for sheriff in 2024.

He was 'remorseful:' Before he shot himself with his own gun on Sunday night, Ramirez offered to resign in a call with Levine Cava, where he described a reported altercation with his wife, the mayor confirmed Wednesday.

MIA\_LEVINECAVAMDPDPRESSER-LA visibly saddened Miami-Dade County Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** takes questions from reporters on the condition of Chief of Public Safety Alfredo "Freddy" Ramirez during a press conference at the Stephen P. Clark Government Center in downtown Miami on July 26, 2023.

'He's stable and talking': Police say Ramirez turned a gun on himself after stopping his vehicle on the shoulder of I-75 just south of Tampa. According to the president of the agency's largest police union. Ramirez has likely lost the use of his right eye but appears to have escaped brain damage and is expected to recover.

Searching for answers: Ramirez became a police officer for noble reasons. In a place with a history of bad cops, killer cops, corrupt cops, his spotless record gleamed like the eight gold stars on his collar. As Ramirez rose through the ranks, from patrolling suburban streets to arresting drug dealers, gang leaders and money launderers, to leading the fourth-largest police force in the country, the respect of colleagues and citizens only grew. And then, he snapped. The rage of Ramirez's breakdown has left those who thought they knew him searching for explanations.

Impact on sheriff's race: By all measures, the race for Miami-Dade County sheriff was Ramirez's to lose. Now political insiders say the contest is wide open. The race already has five candidates, but the deadline to recruit someone who may not already be a member of the Democratic Party has passed.

P4\_200\_croppe\_fitted.jpegA federal judge has ruled that the city of Miami must use this voting map for the November 2023 elections. This order, issued July 30, is the latest turn in a lawsuit challenging the city's 2022 redistricting process.

New Miami map: U.S. District Judge K. Michael Moore on Sunday ordered the city of Miami to adopt a new voting map that is expected to shake up city politics ahead of the November elections. Moore ordered the city to implement a voting map that shifts the boundaries of Miami's five commission districts, including changes that impact who will vote -- and who can run -- in three races to elect commissioners in districts 1, 2 and 4 in November.

Florida's slavery missteps: National attention also continued over the Florida Board of Education's mishandled decision to approve a new middle school curriculum that seeks to teach kids "how slaves developed skills which, in some instances, could be applied for their personal benefit." The governor attempted to distance himself from the change, telling reporters: "These were scholars who put that together, it was not anything that was done politically."

black-codes-gettyimages-640482869.jpgAfter emancipation, repressive laws severely curtailed the rights of formerly enslaved Blacks and allowed white property owners to exploit their labor.

Scholars disagree: NBC News reported that most of the Florida work group did not agree with controversial parts of state's new standards for Black history. Historic sources show several of the 16 individuals cited by the Florida Department of Education to defend the decision were never even slaves.

Black convention to leave state: The Associated Press reported that the Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, the oldest historically Black collegiate fraternity in the U.S., says it is relocating its 2025 convention from Florida because of what it described as the DeSantis' administration's "harmful, racist and insensitive" policies towards African Americans.

MIA\_107DeSantisEdu09NEWPPPFlorida education commissioner Manny Diaz joined Governor Ron DeSantis, at a press conference at True North Classical Academy charter school in Miami where the governor announced and signed several bills including the approval of a $1 billion for teacher salaries and a teachers' bill of Rights, on Tuesday May 09, 2023.

Information or indoctrination? DeSantis repeatedly says he opposes indoctrination in schools, yet the Florida Department of Education in early July approved materials from PragerU, a conservative group that says it's all about indoctrination and "changing minds." The DeSantis administration concluded that the materials produced by the nonprofit co-founded by conservative radio host Dennis Prager is in alignment with the state's standards on how to teach civics and government to K-12 students. The lessons share a common message: Being pro-American means aligning oneself to mainstream conservative talking points.

Town hall on Black history: Florida State Sens. Shevrin Jones and Rosalind Osgood, along with Miami-Dade School Board Vice Chair Steve Gallon III, will host a forum at 7 p.m. on Aug. 10 to allow the public to provide input about the changes to state's Black history curriculum. The event will be held at Antioch Baptist Church in Miami Gardens, Florida's most populous primarily Black city.

State backs down on AP course? The Florida Department of Education said it would not accept the College Board's Advanced Placement psychology course if it includes gender identity lessons. The College Board then refused to change the course, and the state board appears to have approved it, anyway -- making it possible for the nearly 30,000 Florida high school students registered for the AP course to take it in the coming school year. Still, school officials are confused. More details are expected on Monday.

MIA\_20230715AD0453cTURNINGPOINTCONFERENCE.JPG6A headshot with posted sticky notes with comments of Miami Mayor Francis Suarez is seen during the Turning Point Action Conference at the Palm Beach County Convention Center in West Palm Beach, Florida, on Saturday, July 15, 2023.

Suarez small-donor problem: In his local campaigns, Miami Mayor Francis Suarez has had no problem raising millions in political donations through large checks from high-rollers in real estate and tech, some with business before the city. But now as he runs for the Republican nomination for president, he needs 40,000 individual donors, with 200 from more than 20 different states, to qualify for the first GOP primary debate Aug. 23. That's been a challenge.

Donor draws elections lawsuit: A complaint filed with the Federal Elections Commission Tuesday accused an online artificial flower vendor of illegally funneling half a million dollars from an unidentified source into a Super PAC backing Suarez In its complaint calling for an FEC investigation, the Campaign Legal Center, a non-partisan watchdog organization, alleged that PassionForest LLC -- a small online vendor founded in 2021 -- appeared to be a straw donor, illegally masking the identity of whoever was behind a $500,000 contribution to SOS America in October 2022.

Dem registration 'meltdown': In the last four years, the number of registered Democrats in Miami-Dade County has decreased by over 6,000 voters, and their advantage over registered Republicans was almost cut in half, dropping from a 15-point lead in August 2019 to eight in July 2023, according to a Miami Herald analysis of state voter registration data. Democrats now have only about 138,000 more registered voters than Republicans in Miami-Dade, once the fertile source of party juice in statewide elections. But now the shift has Democrats concerned about the party's ability to stay relevant in 2024, when voters will cast ballots in the presidential election and local races.

MIA\_20230708AD0068FloridaDeFlorida Democratic Party Chair Nikki Fried speaks to reporters at the state party's annual Leadership Blue Weekend at the Fontainebleau Hotel in Miami Beach, Florida on July 8.

Voter registration investment: The Florida Democratic Party is injecting $1 million into voter registration efforts through the end of the year as it looks to make up a growing gap with Republicans ahead of the 2024 election cycle. The seven-figure investment coincides with the launch of an 17-plus county "Take Back Florida" tour by the party's chair Nikki Fried and Executive Director Phillip Jerez. The tour and voter registration push is set to launch Wednesday in Orlando.

It's not all about parties: In all but two counties, the percentage of voters who aren't affiliated with any party has seen the sharpest increases. In Miami-Dade, the number of voters registered with no party affiliation rose two percentage points since 2019.

ACLU cuts staff: The American Civil Liberties Union of Florida, a non-profit dedicated to protecting personal freedoms, is downsizing due to budget constraints. The organization is laying off 10% of its staff, according to Executive Director Tiffani Lennon. Lennon said the ACLU of Florida increased its staff to meet "an unprecedented onslaught of attacks on civil rights and liberties" in the state, but now finds itself needing to reduce its expenses by 20%.

IMG\_247\_fitted (1).jpegA booking photo of former state Sen. Frank Artiles, dated March 18, 2021. He was a close ally of FPL when he was in the Legislature and was arrested in connection with the ghost candidate scandal that defeated Democratic state Sen. José Javier Rodríguez in 2020.

Another delay for Artiles: Former state Sen. Frank Artiles will have to wait at least one more week before a trial date is set in the criminal case against him for his role in the "ghost candidate" scheme that interfered with the outcome of a state Senate race in the 2020 election. Miami-Dade Circuit Court Judge Ariel Rodriguez on Friday postponed the hearing to set the trial date until Aug. 4 because of a scheduling conflict.

Black farmers finally get pot license: Two Black farmers have received licenses to grow, process and sell medical marijuana, after a new state law helped clear the way for the long-awaited licenses. The Florida Department of Health issued the licenses July 11 to Suwannee County farmer Terry Donnell Gwinn and Bascom-based Shedrick McGriff. The farmers each met a Friday deadline to submit a required $5 million bond to begin operating, sources confirmed.

IMG\_RCC\_0327.JPG\_6\_1\_TFKLR3UM\_L674613823.JPGA handful of protesters took to the streets of downtown Bradenton, June 1, 2021, to condemn Gov. Ron DeSantis' latest bill signing, calling it a methodical attack on transgender rights.

Transgender people sue state: Citing a "crisis of availability" of care, transgender people are asking a federal judge to block a new state law making it more difficult for trans adults to access hormone-replacement therapy and surgery. The law, passed by the Republican-controlled Legislature this spring and championed by DeSantis, imposes new requirements on patients diagnosed with gender dysphoria.

State challenges order on kids: One week after a federal judge ordered Florida health administrators to cease relying on nursing homes for the care of children with complex medical needs, the state is back in court, arguing that it would be "impossible" to comply with the judge's ruling. U.S. District Judge Donald Middlebrooks had sided with the Justice Department, which claimed that Florida's health policies -- prompted by low Medicaid reimbursement rates -- essentially forced the parents of children with severe disabilities to institutionalize their children in violation of federal civil rights laws.

IMG\_0220.jpegAn N95 ***mask***, like the ones you may have left over from the pandemic, may offer some form of protection from air pollution from the Canada wildfire should you be in an affected area, experts suggest.

Yale study links ***COVID*** deaths and party registration: The politicization of ***COVID***-19 vaccines may have led to a higher excess death rate among Republicans in Ohio and Florida during the coronavirus pandemic, a new study published last week in JAMA Internal Medicine found. The study from Yale researchers looked at 538,159 deaths for individuals aged 25 years and older in Florida and Ohio between January 2018 and December 2021. It concluded that registered Republicans had a higher rate of excess deaths than Democrats after ***COVID***-19 vaccines became widely available in May 2021. After that time, the excess death rate among Republican voters was 43% higher than that among Democratic voters.

Miami Beach's 'no camping' for homeless: Miami Beach officials are considering new measures intended to limit the presence of homeless people in public places, including legislation that could subject people sleeping outdoors to arrest if they don't accept placement in a shelter. For months, the city has been grappling with how to take a more aggressive enforcement approach toward the homeless amid an uptick in the city's homeless population and complaints from residents. At a City Commission meeting Wednesday elected officials directed the city attorney's office to draft legislation that mirrors an ordinance in Orlando -- a "no camping" law that bans sleeping outdoors on public property in most cases and was upheld in 2000 by the United States Court of Appeals for the 11th Circuit.

Thank you for reading! The Politics and Policy in the Sunshine State newsletter was curated this week by Miami Herald Bureau Chief Mary Ellen Klas. We appreciate our readers, and if you have any ideas or suggestions, please drop me a note at [*meklas@miamiherald.com*](mailto:meklas@miamiherald.com) or message me @MaryEllenKlas.

Please subscribe! Know someone who'd like to get this free newsletter? Send this to a friend to receive it weekly.

**Load-Date:** July 31, 2023

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*COVID-19 vaccine, testing sites run by Miami-Dade to permanently close, officials say*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:685M-3Y21-DYJM-M30S-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

May 5, 2023 Friday

Copyright 2023 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** miami\_dade

**Length:** 425 words

**Byline:**  Devoun Cetoute

Miami Herald

**Body**

Miami-Dade County is winding down its remaining coronavirus testing and vaccination programs this weekend as the World Health Organization announced Friday the ***COVID***-19 pandemic no longer represents a "world health emergency".

"I am enormously proud of our extraordinary response to the ***COVID***-19 pandemic by putting in place and scaling effective public health programs, partnering closely with our cities and local businesses to protect residents and visitors, and keeping our economy moving forward," Miami-Dade County Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** said in a statement.

The mayor confirmed Thursday that she had contracted ***COVID*** for the third time but was experiencing only mild symptoms.

Over the last few weeks, ***COVID***-19 testing and ***vaccine*** sites operating under the partnership of Miami-Dade and Nomi Health have been slowing down operations. On Saturday, these sites will permanently close.

READ MORE: Miami-Dade mayor has ***COVID*** again. A high-profile reminder the virus remains

The county said the closure is in preparation for the expiration of the federal public health emergency announced by President Joe Biden earlier this year. The public health emergency was originally declared by the United States Department of Health and Human Services back in January 2020.

While access to vaccines will generally not be affected, at-home tests may not be covered by insurance providers, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said. Also, medication to prevent severe ***COVID***-19, like Paxlovid, will be free while supplies last but the price will then be determined by the medication manufacturer and health insurance coverage.

Miami-Dade said over 2 million residents were vaccinated during the pandemic's stretch due to the efforts of Miami-Dade Fire Rescue, Miami-Dade Police Department, emergency management personnel and healthcare workers.

The county has launched mobile units to bring vaccines to communities, knocked on about 200,000 doors in under-vaccinated neighborhoods and set-up large sites.

"We are also very proud of our residents who stepped up to protect themselves, their families and neighbors," Levine Cava said. "As we look to the future, we will continue to invest in the public health infrastructure that we built during the pandemic and remain vigilant against future variants and other possible public health challenges."

Officials still urge the community to be vigilant by staying informed and continuing to follow recommended safety precautions. Residents can also still find at-home tests for sale at pharmacies and online.

**Load-Date:** May 6, 2023

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Miami-Dade mayor has COVID again. A high-profile reminder the virus remains*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:685D-4T81-DYJM-M1S2-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

May 4, 2023 Thursday

Copyright 2023 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** miami\_dade

**Length:** 150 words

**Byline:**  Douglas Hanks

Miami Herald

**Body**

Miami-Dade County's mayor has ***COVID***-19 again, a reminder that virus remains more than a year after the county ended its last pandemic precautions.

Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava***, 67, contracted ***COVID*** at the start of her term in 2020, again in 2022, and has it a third time this week, spokesperson Natalia Jaramillo confirmed Thursday night. Jaramillo said Levine Cava has cold-like symptoms but isn't seriously ill.

"She feels sick, with cough and congestion," Jaramillo said, "but well enough to work virtually."

READ MORE: When Levine Cava got ***COVID*** in 2022

Levine Cava lifted Miami-Dade's final ***COVID*** precautions, including ***mask*** mandates at county buildings, at the start of 2022, shortly after she contracted the virus for the second time in February 2022.

The latest county ***COVID*** report shows about 10% of the tests for the virus are coming back positive, about half where it was at the start of 2023.

**Load-Date:** May 5, 2023

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Black history showdown arrives, FPL power broker exits, legislative session agenda emerges*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67F6-CP01-JC3J-X206-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

January 30, 2023 Monday

Copyright 2023 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** newsletters

**Length:** 4330 words

**Byline:**  Mary Ellen Klas

Newsletters |

**Body**

It's Monday, Jan. 30, and this week is the start of Black History Month. It's also either the beginning of the next chapter, or the end of the fight in Florida over the College Board's new high school honors class on African American History. (We're also awaiting New College's newly-reconstituted board of directors which will meet this week for the first time.)

But first, let's look ahead: Last weekend, former President Donald Trump kicked off his 2024 White House bid with stops in the early-voting states of New Hampshire and South Carolina. It's too early for this to matter, but a recent University of New Hampshire Granite State poll of likely GOP primary voters found 42% prefer Gov. Ron DeSantis over Trump, who ranked second with 30%.

gov.jpgThe warm relationship between Donald Trump and Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis has cooled as the 2024 presidential race approaches.

DeSantis leads in Granite State: New Hampshire Gov. Chris Sununu suggested in a CNN interview that he is considering a run for president. But even he emphasized that if the race were held today, DeSantis "would probably win New Hampshire right now, without a doubt."

Trumps calls DeSantis 'disloyal': In an interview with the Associated Press, Trump made sure to disparage DeSantis on Saturday, suggesting that if Florida's governor challenges Trump for the GOP nomination, "I do think it would be a great act of disloyalty because, you know, I got him in,'' Trump said, referring to his 2018 endorsement of DeSantis that catapulted him to victory in the GOP primary. "He had no chance. His political life was over."

DeSantis staffs up: The Washington Post reported that DeSantis's political team is staffing up for a presidential race. It named two potential hires for early primary states: Phil Cox, a former executive director of the Republican Governors Association, and Generra Peck, a campaign manager for DeSantis' re-election bid and one of the key organizers of his inauguration. The Hill reported that DeSantis super PAC, Ron to the Rescue, was collecting signatures at the New Hampshire GOP meeting on Saturday to start building a team of supporters.

MIA\_107MiamiState27NEWPPPCity of Miami Mayor Francis Suarez speaks at Miami City Hall, as he delivers his State of the City address, Friday January 27, 2023.

In Miami, Suarez hints: After returning from the annual meeting of the U.S. Conference of Mayors in Washington, D.C., Miami Mayor Francis Suarez, who is the current president of the group, was ready with a quip for his State of the City address last week. "There's only one job in America that would make you want to stay there long term,'' he said of the nation's capital. Speculation has been growing that he is mulling the idea of running for the GOP nomination for president. "I am considering it," Suarez said after his speech.

WHAT WE'RE TALKING ABOUT

MIA\_FPL\_Implosion\_MJO\_7Eric Silagy, is the retiring president, CEO and chairman of Florida Power & Light.

FPL's Silagy heads to the exit: After what his boss called a year of "distractions," Florida Power & Light CEO Eric Silagy announced his retirement last week, following months of negative media reports about his secretive role in manipulating state and local campaigns. Reporting by the Miami Herald and other news organizations had revealed FPL's efforts under his leadership to secretly bankroll a spoiler candidate in a Gainesville state Senate race and a Miami-Dade county commission race, secretly craft legislation to maintain FPL's grip on the solar energy market, snap up a public utility in Jacksonville, push for rate increases on residential customers, tail a journalist it disliked using private investigators, and secretly take over a supposedly independent news website to attack critics.

The company denied there is any connection between a pending investigation before the Federal Elections Commission over some of the incidents, and Silagy's retirement.

Seeks to increase bills: All this came the same week that FPL said it will ask regulators to allow it to collect $1.3 billion more from customers' bills to recoup costs related to Hurricane Ian and Hurricane Nicole and to add $2.1 billion to bills to pay for the high cost of natural gas in 2022.

Election 2024 DeSantisFlorida Gov. Ron DeSantis wants to ensure doctors are not punished for spreading harmful misinformation.

DeSantis' race rage: With 2024 wind in his sails, it's no wonder that DeSantis is firing some hot rounds. The lastest to draw national attention -- the Florida Department of Education's rejection of the pilot program for the Advanced Placement African American History course -- has led to widespread criticism that Florida is attempting to turn the clock back on racial progress in the country.

DeSantis warns of 'indoctrination': On Monday as criticism mounted, DeSantis issued his first explanation for why the state rejected the course being taught in 60 high schools across the nation, including in Florida. He said the agency rejected the new Advanced Placement course because some of the topics attempted to use Black history to push a political agenda. He accused the College Board, which developed the curriculum, of attempting to indoctrinate students because the coursework addressed "queer theory," discussions about abolishing prisons, and lessons on intersectionality -- the concept that racism, sexism and classism can overlap to affect people in many ways.

Protesters gather at Philly event: Critics blasted the explanation and by Monday evening, as DeSantis arrived in Philadelphia to receive an award from the conservative and prestigious Union League, a squad of police cordoned off the perimeter of the building as more than 100 people protested his stance on race-related issues, including members of the League.

MIA\_01HISTORYMIAMIBLACKEXHIOn Wednesday, October 12, 2022 HistoryMIami Museum Executive Dir. Natalia Crujeiras engage in a conversation with Anita Francios, the museum's assistant curator, center, and Lily Wong, curator at the New-York Historical Society, right, prior taking a final tour of HistoryMiami's newest exhibition Black Citizenship in the Age of Jim Crow. Black Citizenship in the Age of Jim Crow, organized by the New-York Historical Society, explores the struggle for full citizenship and racial equality that unfolded in the 50 years after the Civil War. HistoryMiami Museum curated Stories of Resistance from Black Miami, an oral history project co-created by the museum and individuals involved in past and contemporary movements.

Changes released Feb. 1: On Tuesday, the College Board issued a statement saying that on Feb. 1, it would release the alterations it is recommending to the curriculum of the pilot AP class, which is uniform across the country. It did not say whether it would address the complaints of the DeSantis administration, or whether the changes would be the result of the teacher feedback the board has been receiving from educators across the country since March.

Illinois gov issues warning too: On Wednesday, Illinois Gov. J.B. Pritzker sent a letter to the College Board urging it not to appease DeSantis and his "political grandstanding." Pritzer, a Democrat who like DeSantis is considered a potential candidate for president in 2024, urged the board to "refuse to bow to political pressure." He warned that his state would "not accept this watering down of history."

Lawsuit threats: Finally, attorney Ben Crump and Black leaders from across the state gathered in Tallahassee to accuse the governor of trying to "eliminate Black studies," and issued a warning: If state officials reject the final curriculum for the AP class, they have three high school students ready to sue the state to stop them.

Republican Meeting (2)Ronna McDaniel. (AP Photo/Rick Bowmer)

DeSantis swings at RNC, misses: DeSantis entered the contest over who should be the next head of the Republican National Committee last week when he said in an interview that the party needs a change in leadership after a series of disappointing recent elections. Despite his endorsement of a rival to Chairwoman Ronna McDaniel, McDaniel won a fourth term.

WHAT WE'RE WATCHING

Session priorities: The drip of legislation for the 60-day legislative session that begins March 7 has already started to emerge and we're watching for education, criminal justice and housing issues to draw the most heat.

Kendall\_MJO\_11.JPGGov. Ron DeSantis, left, and former Miami-Dade County Commissioner Esteban Bovo, take a photo with students at St. John the Apostle Catholic School in Hialeah, Florida, on Tuesday, May 11, 2021. DeSantis signed a bill Tuesday expanding and revamping Florida's school scholarship and voucher programs.

First up is education: Parents would have access to up to about $8,000 in state-funded vouchers to be used to pay for private school tuition and a wide variety of school-related expenses, under legislation being pushed by House Speaker Paul Renner, a Palm Coast Republican. Lawmakers have produced no price tag for the program but it is expected to cost Florida public schools between $600 million the first year to $4 billion within five years.

The program would also vastly expand the existing private school voucher program and significantly change the complexion of Florida's public schools.

Union busting and bonuses: Another plan, to invest an extra $200 million annually toward salary increases for teachers, bringing the yearly total to $1 billion, comes with a catch. The bill, announced by the governor last week, also requires that teachers' unions represent at least 60% of eligible employees and no longer be allowed to automatically deduct union dues from their paychecks.

Shortening school board terms: DeSantis also proposed reviving a years-long effort by Republicans to impose term limits on local school board members, a change that may not be constitutional. The governor said he'd also like to see a constitutional amendment that shortens terms from 12 to eight years and continues his effort to politicize school boards by allowing them to also be partisan positions.

Normandy workforce 2.PNG"Workforce housing is important, because we've had an influx of new residents as a result of the tech boom and remote work. That's increased pressure for housing stock," said Robin Bachin a history professor at the University of Miami specializing in urbanism and assistant provost for civic and community engagement. Above: A rendering of a new workforce housing development in Miami Beach's Normandy Isles community.

Workforce housing hopes: Senate President Kathleen Passidomo, a Naples Republican, unveiled sweeping legislation last week aimed at bringing more affordable housing to workers so they can live where they are employed. The wide-ranging proposal (SB 102), dubbed the "Live Local Act," would inject millions of new money into incentives for private investment and order revisions to local housing regulations to encourage mixed-use development in struggling commercial areas. But in areas facing soaring rents and scarce rental units, the measure would also preempt local rent controls.

Cracking down on hate: Legislators are ready to respond to the wave of antisemitic messages that have emerged across the state. They unveiled a plan last week to make it a felony to project antisemitic images onto buildings after an antisemitic message was projected onto a stadium after a college football game in Jacksonville.

0219\_BRLO\_DeathPenalty.jpgThe death chamber at Florida State Prison in Starke.

Penalties for death, drugs and sex crimes: DeSantis announced he wants legisators to adopt proposals to expand the death penalty to certain types of sex crimes, mandate life sentences for people convicted of selling fentanyl that looks like candy, and, citing Nicholas Cruz, wants the state to remove the requirement of a supermajority vote to convict someone to death.

Cruz, convicted of the shooting spree that killed 17 and injured 17 others at Marjorie Stoneman Douglass High School in Parkland, was given life in prison after three out of 12 jurors voted against the death penalty. DeSantis said death penalty verdicts shouldn't be "vetoed" by one juror, and said he preferred a super majority vote.

IMG\_cava.jpg\_6\_1\_88JV79AI\_L632235912.JPGIn 2015, County Commissioner ***Daniella Levine Cava***, now county mayor, speaks during the demonstration in support of Florida lawmakers expanding eligibility for Medicaid as called for under the Affordable Care Act.

Not a likely priority -- Medicaid: Although 900,000 Floridians are expected to lose medical coverage through the state's Medicaid program beginning April 1, Florida's Republican legislators are not likely to do much about it. More than 5.6 million Floridians receive Medicaid, a large share of them poor children. The rolls have swollen by nearly 1.8 million people since 2020, when the federal government paid states extra money to keep people covered during the pandemic even if they were no longer eligible. When the federal government ends the emergency coverage, one in 22 Floridians are expected to lose health insurance.

Medicaid expansion would draw down additional federal dollars to pay for the uninsured under the federal Affordable Care Act. But the GOP-led Legislature opposes the cost it will add to the state. Florida is one of only 11 states not to take advantage of the explansion program.

Record enrollment for Obamacare: Florida may on paper be a red state, but residents are breaking records when it comes to signing up for Obamacare, the federal health insurance exchange Republicans vigorously opposed. Florida had the highest number of people in the country applying for health insurance under the Affordable Care Act during the open enrollment period, which began Nov. 1 and ended on Jan. 15, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services reported last week.

With more than 3.2 million people enrolling, Florida's residents comprised 20 percent of the country's total. As the third most populous state, Florida accounts for only about 7 percent of the U.S. population. The increase, 19% over last year's open enrollment numbers, is even high for Florida.

Abortion ruling? Legislators say they need to wait for the Florida Supreme Court to rule on the challenge to the state's ban on abortions after 15-weeks of gestation before they take up any new legislation. A ruling doesn't look like it's coming any time soon, however. The Florida Supreme Court last week rejected requests to halt the law but agreed to hear the case and gave both sides months to complete their briefing schedule.

Screenshot 2023-01-23 155608.pngClassroom libraries in Manatee County are being covered, while books are sent to certified media specialists to see if they meet the guidelines of House Bill 1467, which details what books are appropriate and not appropriate in Florida schools.

Shielding books: Meanwhile, across the state, classrooms continue to feel the impact of the governor's culture wars. "Farewell, classroom library," said one Manatee County teacher as schools were told to cover the books normally made available to students in their classrooms to avoid violating a new law that requires all reading material in classrooms and libraries to be approved by each district. The county is relying heavily on volunteers to vet books and get approved titles back on classroom shelves.

newcollege1.jpgChristopher Rufo, one of six controversial new trustees at New College of Florida, talks with students at the foot of the stage after addressing an audience on the Sarasota campus Wednesday, Jan. 25, 2023.

New College gets Rufo visit: The newly-appointed Board of Directors of New College will meet for the first time on Tuesday and the school last week got a preview of what's to come. In an unusual visit to the campus of the Sarasota-based college, two of the six people appointed by the governor told faculty and students they have a mandate to rescue an institution they described as failing and in need of a turnaround. Christopher Rufo, a conservative journalist and commentator, called himself "a drastic solution to a crisis." He was accompanied by Jason "Eddie" Speir, the founder and superintendent of a private Christian high school in Bradenton. They were greeted by skeptical students and wary staff.

Bail plan backfires: Before Miami-Dade County could get its plan off the ground to allow certain low-level offenders to be released from jail without posting bond or seeing a judge, some cities announced they would preemptively oppose the idea. The proposal under development by the Public Defender's Office, the State Attorney's Office, the Miami-Dade Homeless Trust and Miami-Dade Corrections and Rehabilitation would use computer software to help determine whether people arrested for certain low-level crimes could be released immediately.

But hours after DeSantis announced in his news conference that he would block "rogue" judges pursuing bail reform, leaders of Miami-Dade County's justice system announced they would delay new rules to make it easier for people with low incomes to leave jail while they await trial.

signs.jpgThe Obamacare Exchange is the largest part of the individual health-insurance market.

Nursing scam: Florida has a massive nursing shortage. Now it has a massive nursing scam. Federal agents last week arrested about 25 suspects in South Florida and accused them of selling fabricated nursing degrees to thousands of students who then used the bogus diplomas to take licensing exams in several states, including Florida, New York, New Jersey and Texas.

US-NEWS-MEDICAID-EXPANSION-DMT.JPGFlorida's Agency for Health Care Administration adopted a rule in August, that prohibits transgender Medicaid beneficiaries from getting coverage for gender-affirming treatments like puberty suppressants and hormone therapies

State 'cherry picked' transgender data: An email from an analyst with the Agency for Health Care Administration said that Florida did not "present an honest and accurate assessment" of available research on treatment for gender dysphoria when it blocked Medicaid from covering the treatment, according to documents that emerged as part of a lawsuit from groups suing the state for discriminating against transgender individuals.. The analyst accused the state's final report of "cherry picking data."

DeSantis read study wrong: As he proposed to extend the state's ban on mandates for ***COVID*** vaccines and face masks last week, DeSantis lobbed a flurry of criticism at President Joe Biden and "the medical establishment" and then suggested the bivalent booster is 'more likely' to cause ***COVID*** infections. Several scientists and one of the researchers that wrote the study told PolitiFact they disagreed. DeSantis' "statement is incorrect," said one expert. "That conclusion cannot be drawn from that study, and the authors state that it is not designed to evaluate that association."

tt\_monument\_1.jpgA monument which remembers Confederate veterans, was erected by the Judah P. Benjamin Chapter of the United Daughters of the Confederacy. The monument, which has a Confederate flag etched on one side, was unveiled in June 1924 and sat outside the Manatee County Historic Courthouse.

Confederate monument vote delayed: The Manatee County Board of Commissioners was poised to decide whether to restore a Confederate monument to downtown Bradenton on Tuesday but the vote, expected to unleash a fury of backlash, has been postponed. First installed in 1924, the 22-foot-tall memorial featured the names of Confederate leaders, including Stonewall Jackson, Robert E. Lee and Jefferson Davis. It stood for decades outside the historic courthouse when the commission voted to remove it on 2017 following a wave of protests.

baugh tt.jpgCounty Commissioner Vanessa Baugh listens during a planning meeting to consider allowing Cirque Italia to set up in Oneco.

Commissioner fined for ***vaccine*** favoritism: Manatee County Commissioner Vanessa Baugh organized a February 2021 ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** event featuring DeSantis at two exclusive communities with large Republican constituencies. Guest would get early access to the limited ***vaccine*** doses, even though more than 100,000 people were on the county waiting list. County staff said Baugh also put herself on the list to be among the recipients of the ***vaccine***.

The Manatee County Sheriff's Office conducted an investigation and concluded that although Baugh "clearly" attempted to benefit from the event, she did not commit a crime. The case was referred to the Florida Commission on Ethics. On Friday, the commission ordered Baugh to pay a $8,000 fine and accept a public reprimand from the nine-member county commission.

IMG-8624.JPGLori Alhadeff, the chair of the Broward County School Board, and the Broward Schools Superintendent Vickie Cartwright speak at a press conference held at the Kathleen C. Wright Building in Fort Lauderdale after the vote to separate by mutual agreement on Tuesday, September 24, 2022.

Political ousting? "Come to your own conclusions," said Broward County School Superintendent Vickie Cartwright after the school board unanimously voted to part ways with her by mutual agreement last week. The vote ended a three-month saga that included the board scolding her in October, dismissing her in November and rehiring her in December.

6\_4\_March\_for\_our\_lives\_presser7 (1).JPGMarjory Stoneman Douglas High School students Emma Gonzalez, David Hogg and Cameron Kasky hold a press conference for the "March For Our Lives" movement.

Penalties against guns laws stand: In a case stemming from the 2018 mass shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School, the Florida Supreme Court last week rejected a challenge to a state law that threatens stiff penalties if local officials pass gun-related regulations. The 5-1 ruling was a blow to 33 cities and counties and dozens of local officials who argued that penalties in the 2011 law were unconstitutional. It was a victory for state Republican leaders and Second Amendment advocates such as the National Rifle Association.

MIA\_01PARADIS\_CALDWELLA conservative FOX analyst Gianno Caldwell said he was tossed from Paradis Books and Bread in North Miami because of his politics. On Sunday, January 22, 2023 Paradis Books and Bread was closed.

Comments lead to café closing: Fox News analyst Gianno Caldwell was booted from Paradis Books and Bread in North Miami last week after cafe workers said they found his loud comments troubling. The dispute between the cafe owners, which is Black-and-women-owned, and Caldwell incited such a deluge of online harassment that the café said it would shut down operations until next month. According to the cafe's statement, Caldwell and others in his party spoke about "women in degrading ways" and used "eugenic arguments around their thoughts on Roe v. Wade."

MIA\_INGRAHAM\_HIGHWAY\_DAV6South Floirda Water Management District Board Member Cheryl Meads speaks during a press conference announcing the Taylor Slough Flow Improvement Project which will make additional modifications to the Old Ingraham Highway (OIH) to improve hydrologic and ecological connectivity of surface water within Taylor Slough in Everglades National Park at Ernest F. Coe Visitor Center in Homestead, Florida, on Thursday, January 26, 2023. The goal of the Taylor Slough Flow Improvement Project is to reduce flow impediments and short-circuiting of freshwater flow to Taylor Slough caused by Old Ingraham Highway.

Freeing fresh water: The latest step in righting the wrongs done to the Everglades centuries ago kicked off last week with shovelfuls of ceremonial dirt flung into the air. The South Florida Water Management District announced a new project to uncork the flow of much-needed freshwater south, into the thirsty Florida Bay, by cutting holes into a long abandoned highway winding through Everglades National Park.

Cay Sal freighter.jpgClose to 400 people crowd the deck of a Haitian migrant boat in the ocean near Cay Sal Bank in the Bahamas Sunday, Jan. 22, 2023.

Coast Guard says migration plan is working: The United States has a mass migration plan in place in Florida to address migrant surge, the head of the Coast Guard for the seventh district told the Miami Herald. The Coast Guard had been making between 100 to 200 repatriations a day, the official said, but problems over the holidays occurred because the Cuban government temporarily stopped taking migrants back. The Task Force has interdicted 1,445 people between Dec. 30, 2022, and Jan. 2. State and federal officials said last week there are signs the exodus is slowing.

sbf.jpgSamuel Bankman-Fried headed crypto behemoth FTX, which crashed spectacularly in November.

Crypto giant's celebrity debt: FTX, the crypto giant that became a massive Ponzi scheme and has left billions of dollars in losses, owes money to a scores of local businesses and individuals all over South Florida, according to new federal bankruptcy court records. The company's potential creditors include South Beach restaurant Carbone and LIV nightclub, charities belonging to Miami Heat star Udonis Haslem and Baptist Health South Florida, as well as law firms and financial institutions.

MIA\_07ROSEWOODFIUEXHIBITLizzie Robinson Jenkins is photographed in front of portraits of her grandmother and herself, part of the exhibition 'An Elegy to Rosewood,' in commemoration of the 100-year anniversary of the Rosewood Massacre, at FIU's Frost Art Museum.

Head to the Frost: Take a walk into history this month at Miami's Frost Art Museum as it presents An Elegy to Rosewood, an exhibit that commemorates the 100-year anniversary of the massacre.

Miami Herald Capitol Bureau Chief Mary Ellen Klas curates the Politics and Policy in the Sunshine State newsletter. We appreciate our readers, and if you have any ideas or suggestions, please drop me a note at [*meklas@miamiherald.com*](mailto:meklas@miamiherald.com)

Please subscribe! Know someone who'd like to get this free newsletter? Send this to a friend to receive it weekly.

**Load-Date:** January 30, 2023

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Does the bivalent COVID booster protect against the new omicron subvariant?*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:679G-XGD1-JC3J-X4W2-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

January 12, 2023 Thursday

Copyright 2023 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** coronavirus

**Length:** 820 words

**Byline:**  Michelle Marchante

Miami Herald

**Body**

With a new omicron subvariant on track to becoming the dominant ***COVID*** strain in the country, you might have some questions about how protected you are.

Will the bivalent ***COVID*** booster work against this more contagious strain, known as XBB.1.5 and dubbed Kraken? What about ***COVID*** treatments like monoclonal antibodies and medications like Paxlovid?

Here's what we know:

Does the bivalent ***COVID*** booster work against new subvariant?

Pfizer and Moderna's bivalent ***COVID*** boosters were designed to provide some protection against the original ***COVID*** strain, as well as omicron. The shots were created long before XBB.1.5 began circulating in the country and in South Florida.

XBB.1.5 made up about 28 percent of U.S. ***COVID***-19 cases for the week ending Jan. 7, up from 2 percent in the beginning of December, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The World Health Organization considers this new mutated strain to be more contagious, "incredibly transmissible," and slightly better at evading immunity, both from previous infections and vaccination. However, this omicron descendant still shares many similarities with previous omicron subvariants.

As a result, the bivalent boosters should still provide some protection against this subvariant, said Dr. Raj Palraj, an assistant professor of medicine at Mayo Clinic's College of Medicine in Rochester, Minnesota, who also works in the Mayo Clinic Health System in Lacrosse, Wisconsin.

"It may not prevent us from getting the infection, but hopefully you can reduce the severity of the infection," and avoid hospitalization, said Palraj, who is an infectious disease specialist.

READ MORE: The new, more contagious omicron subvariant is in Miami-Dade. Here's what to know

Where can you get a bivalent booster in South Florida?

Just like the ***COVID***-19 vaccines, bivalent boosters are available at South Florida retail pharmacies including Publix, Walmart, Winn-Dixie, Fresco y Mas, Walgreens, CVS and Navarro Discount pharmacies. There are also still some ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** sites in Miami-Dade, including at Tropical Park.

To find a ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** site near you in Miami-Dade, visit miamidade.gov/***vaccine***.

"Miami-Dade County is still offering ***COVID*** tests and vaccines at no cost to our residents at multiple locations, to keep our community safe and healthy. We are not lowering our guard when there are still ***COVID*** variants impacting residents and visitors alike," said Miami-Dade County Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava***. "That's why I continue to invite all Miamians to get the latest updated ***vaccine***, so we can each stay healthy this new year and protect ourselves and our loved ones."

Broward's health department is also operating one ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** site at the Broward Library Branch, 751 Southwest 121 Ave. in Davie. For hours of operation, visit broward.org/CoronaVirus/.

READ MORE: What's the ***COVID*** risk in Miami and the rest of Florida? Here's how to check

Do Paxlovid and Evusheld work against the new subvariant?

One of the ***COVID*** treatments is Paxlovid, which doctors can prescribe to people 12 and older who have mild-to-moderate ***COVID*** and are considered to be high risk for severe disease, including hospitalization or death.

Paxlovid, an antiviral drug in pill form, is still effective against the new subvariant, according to Palraj.

Another treatment, Evusheld, however, may not be.

The U.S. Food & Drug Administration earlier this month announced that it doesn't expect Evusheld, which the agency authorized under emergency use to be given to immunocompromised people who didn't get an "adequate response" to ***COVID*** vaccinations, to work against XBB.1.5. It's too similar to other variants not neutralized by Evusheld, the FDA said.

"This means that Evusheld may not provide protection against developing ***COVID***-19 for individuals who have received Evusheld and are later exposed to XBB.1.5," the FDA said. "However, we are awaiting additional data to verify that Evusheld is not active against XBB.1.5."

READ MORE: What's the ***COVID*** situation in Miami and why are Florida hospitals full of patients?

What about monoclonal antibody treatments?

The FDA in late November revoked its emergency use authorization of bebtelovimab, made by Eli Lilly, because it wasn't expected to be effective against newer omicron subvariants BQ.1 and BQ.1.1., which are some of the prominent strains in the country. (XBB.1.5. could soon outpace them.)

Eli Lilly's bebtelovimab was the last remaining ***COVID***-19 monoclonal antibody treatment available in the U.S. under emergency use authorization as newer variant strains made other monoclonal antibody treatments ineffective.

Patients ill with ***COVID*** should speak with their doctor about their treatment options.

Inside the ***COVID*** Unit: Battling the Coronavirus Pandemic in MiamiJackson South doctors and nurses were filmed for the ***COVID*** documentary. Watch our live discussion to find out what's happened in Miami-Dade since the film's release.

**Load-Date:** January 13, 2023

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Christine Duffy was rejected as a flight attendant. Now, she runs Carnival Cruise Line*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6712-2S51-DYJM-M008-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

December 4, 2022 Sunday

Copyright 2022 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** tourism\_cruises

**Length:** 2139 words

**Byline:**  Anna Jean Kaiser

Miami Herald

**Body**

When she was a teenager, Christine Duffy dreamed of being a flight attendant. But that career goal was squashed when Pan American Airways rejected her for being too short.

"This was in the '80s, that was a very glamorous job at an international airline," she said. "But you had to be 5'4'' to be a Pan Am flight attendant. And I was not!"

Duffy went on to wear many hats in the travel industry -- from receptionist to CEO of a business travel company and from lobbyist in Washington to her current position as president of Carnival Cruise Line, one of South Florida's most iconic brands. She took an non-traditional, sometimes risky path that led her to the top of the cruise industry.

Duffy took the helm at Carnival Cruise Line in 2015, overseeing consistently climbing booking numbers through 2019. Then the coronavirus pandemic hit in 2020 -- the largest crisis in the history of cruising. The industry had to deal with fallout fromsuperspreader events on ships and crew members being stranded at sea without pay.

Duffy's Carnival Cruise Line was the first to get all of its ships running after ships were barred from sailing for over a year and then bounced back with record sales in 2022.

MIA\_CHRISTINEDUFFY\_CARNIVAL (37)Miami, FL- November 20, 2022 - Christine Duffy, President of Carnival Cruise Line, speaks during a christening ceremony for Carnival's newest ship, Carnival Celebration inside the ship's three-deck-high atrium, Celebration Central.

Duffy is outgoing, warm and repeatedly described as "fun" by her colleagues. Industry experts say she's behind a Carnival culture shift that has made its corporate headquarters a more desirable place to work and has connected with customers more than some of her predecessors.

"It was the 'fun ships' but not the fun place to work -- now it seems like it's a fun ship, a fun place to work and a very profitable company," said Peter Ricci, who is the director of the hospitality-management program at Florida Atlantic University and has long worked with job recruiters at cruise lines to place his students.

"Carnival had a reputation for being very bureaucratic and political. I've been in this business for many years and I've met many of the top executives there and I really think it is a new day at Carnival. I think she's the most vibrant, visible leader Carnival has had since the founder," he said, referring to Ted Arison, who founded Carnival and is considered the inventor of modern cruising.

CCLseussWaterworks1Carnival Cruise Line President Christine Duffy, right, leads Dr. Seuss characters holding a rendering of a new Dr. Seuss-themed water park at a news conference Thursday, April 20, 2017, at the Cruise3Sixty travel agent convention in Fort Lauderdale.

Duffy, 61, is one of the few women leading the world's largest cruise brands, but she doesn't focus on her gender when discussing leadership. She was rising in the travel industry when there weren't many female business leaders to look up to. Her husband of 40 years stopped working when Duffy's career took off and was a ***stay-at-home*** dad to their two children in the early 2000s.

"All of the opportunities I've had were given by men, I've always been hired by men -- men that have believed in me, trusted me, mentored me," she said. "I know that it is an inspiration for other women to see me in this role, especially when I go onto the ships and talk to the women working there."

She adds: "I try not to just make it about women though. We should be speaking to everyone. Me being successful in the role and in the company is because we've got a great team and we're doing a great job."

CarnivalFOC02.jpgWilliam Burke, chief maritime officer for Carnival Corp.; Christine Duffy, Carnival Cruise Line president; and Micky Arison, Carnival Corp. chairman, at Carnival's fleet operations center at the company's Miami headquarters.Featuring a 74-foot-long video wall composed of 57 LED screens, the 35,000-square-foot facility is custom-designed for hands-on, around-the-clock monitoring and support of the line's 26 cruise ships.

Duffy said she has crafted her team based on diversity -- not only demographic, but diversity of business experience. Duffy's own background and broad experience at various levels in the travel industry got her hired at Carnival. She worked entry-level roles as a receptionist and a travel agent and never received a college degree.

"I'm somebody who totally started at the bottom and worked my way up. I've had a lot of different experiences, I think it's what makes me very empathetic as a leader, because I've done a lot of those front-line jobs," she said.

That caught the eye of Arnold Donald, the previous CEO of Carnival Corporation, the parent company of Carnival Cruise Line and nine other cruise lines.

"What I saw in Christine was a lot of diversity," Donald said in an interview. "Yes, she's a woman, but she's also a woman who thrived in different types of situations. Her background and training [are] different from a lot of people you come across -- one thing is that she doesn't have a college degree, so what? Someone who has been able to achieve everything she has without a college degree, they think differently."

When asked what she does outside of work, Duffy struggled to answer. She said the job is practically a 24/7 operation and she doesn't get much time to herself. But when she does, she visits her two adult children who live in Orlando and Philadelphia and her first granddaughter, who is 18 months old.

Of all the cruises that she has been on, her favorite memory was her first voyage after being appointed president: A New Year's cruise on the Carnival Breeze.

"It was so incredible to think that I was going to be running this company and that this is what we do," she said. "And just the joy and meeting people -- it was really an incredible celebration. And my family was with me, so it was special."

Her favorite Carnival ship? "That's like asking who is your favorite kid!" she joked, before admitting it was the brand new Carnival Celebration.

Orlando to France to Philly

Duffy was born in Orlando in 1961. Her Sicilian grandfather owned citrus orchards in Central Florida. Her mother, a native of France, moved the family to her home country when Duffy was 2 years old. She became bilingual and bicultural -- which she described as a kickstarter for her curiosity and appetite for travel.

Several years later, the family relocated to Philadelphia. Her father sold Singer sewing machines, which led her to her future husband -- their dads worked together as salesmen and they grew up in the same neighborhood.

When becoming a flight attendant didn't pan out, Duffy went to Walnut Street in downtown Philadelphia to look for a job at what was then a cluster of travel agencies. With a high-school diploma, she was hired as a receptionist at Rosenbluth Travel. She then became a travel agent at McGettigan, a business and events travel agency, and climbed the ranks to chief operating officer. In 2001, that company was acquired by Maritz Travel, another business travel-focused firm.

MIA\_CHRISTINEDUFFY\_CARNIVAL (41)Miami, FL- November 17, 2022 - Christine Duffy, President of Carnival Cruise Line

In 2004, Duffy was the first woman named as president and CEO of Maritz in the company's more than 100-year history. The promotion prompted a move from Philadelphia to the company's headquarters in St. Louis. While living in Missouri, she crossed paths with Donald who at that time was CEO of Monsanto and later became the head of Carnival Corporation.

From lobbying in D.C. to Carnival Cruise Line

Duffy's transition to the cruise industry arose out of the great recession. Duffy was CEO at Maritz in the late 2000s, when companies started tightening their budgets and technology was beginning to enable virtual meetings, crushing travel businesses such as Maritz. She said some of her biggest clients were pressured by then-President Barack Obama's comments to cut back on expenses such as trips to Las Vegas.

"At Maritz, we were all corporate meetings and events, and everybody started canceling. It was the financial crisis and no one wanted to be seen taking trips," she said. "So I got very engaged -- I got connected with the U.S. Travel Association, and we went to Washington and began, I wouldn't say lobbying as much as advocating, for the travel industry, and why travel matters across every congressional district in this country."

Her efforts caught the attention of Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA), the cruise industry's lobbying group in Washington, and she ended up as the new president and CEO.

MIA\_Carnival\_Terminal\_F\_MJOCarnival Cruise Line President Christine Duffy, left, and Miami-Dade County Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** attend a groundbreaking ceremony for Carnival Cruise Line's Terminal F at PortMiami in Miami, Florida, on Friday, Jan. 29, 2021.

"Sometimes, it's not about just going up the ladder. It's about doing something that exposes you to something that's very different and outside your comfort zone," she said. "I wasn't a public affairs or policy person. I was CEO of Maritz and I could have stayed CEO at Maritz. People thought I was crazy, but if I hadn't done that, I wouldn't be here."

At CLIA, Duffy got experience in dealing with cruise-ship disasters. She led the industry response to the 2012 capsizing of the Costa Concordia off the coast of Italy. Thirty-four people were killed. In 2013, a fire in the engine room on the Carnival Triumph knocked out the ship's power, sending passengers and crew members drifting at sea for four days with no power and no working toilets. Duffy said they introduced new regulations and a more stringent safety standard that cruise lines committed to and also introduced a passenger bill of rights in an attempt to clearly outline what passengers can count on from cruise lines.

As Duffy navigated crises at CLIA, an opening was on the horizon at Carnival Cruise Line -- former President Gerry Cahill announced he would retire in 2014. Donald had recently taken the reins of Carnival Corporation, succeeding Micky Arison, the son of Carnival's founder, and approached Duffy about throwing her hat in the ring.

MIA\_Carnival\_Anniversary\_MJ (5)Carnival Cruise Lines executives from left to right: Micky Arison, Christine Duffy and Arnold Donald celebrate Carnival's 50th Birthday Anniversary event aboard the Carnival Conquest as it was docked at PortMiami on Friday, March 11, 2022.

Internally, Duffy is known for being upbeat and personable. She describes herself as a "glass half full" type of leader who beefed up the company's HR department as well as its internal and external communications departments.

Externally, Duffy is known for frequenting the ships often and engaging with customers. She has integrated celebrities and household brands on Carnival ships -- including Shaquille O'Neal (Carnival's "chief fun officer") and restaurant concepts from celebrity chefs such as Guy Fieri and Emeril Lagasse.

MIA\_CHRISTINEDUFFY\_CARNIVAL (36)Miami, FL- November 20, 2022 - Christine Duffy, the CEO of Carnival Cruise Line, center, during a ribbon cutting for Carnival's newly redesigned and expanded Terminal F at PortMiami Also in the photo, left to right, are, Carnival Corp. & plc CEO Josh Weinstein, newly elected Miami-Dade Commissioner District 12, J.C. Bermudez, Christine Duffy, newly elected Miami-Dade County Commissioner District 6, Kevin M. Cabrera and Miami-Dade County Mayor, ***Daniella Levine-Cava***

Duffy says she tries to bring empathy to crises.

"In this job, you have to make very tough decisions, and we deal with serious issues," she said, mentioning layoffs during the ***COVID***-19 pandemic, managing a workforce of 40,000 people with 120 nationalities, pleasing shareholders and dealing with regulators, environmental compliance and health inspectors.

"I can be very serious, and I can be tough," she said. "Not everything is fun. But at the end of the day, you want to have a culture where people aren't afraid and to acknowledge that mistakes happen. And when those happen, we learn from it, but it doesn't need to be fatal."

Donald described her as a fierce problem-solver who "makes lemonade out of these lemons" and recalled a time when a ship had to emergency dry dock for repairs, canceling cruises and causing a revenue hit. When the ship was nearly ready to go, Duffy got the ship back in the water at full capacity in one week even though cruises usually take months to sell out.

"She's very results-oriented. When faced with obstacles and challenges, she absolutely just says, 'OK, this has happened. What are you going to do to be successful anyway?' " he said. "She's challenging and demanding. People tell her, 'we can't do this' all the time. Those working with her can feel the pressure of her expectations but in the end, she elevates them."

**Load-Date:** December 5, 2022

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*What did we learn from the Florida primaries? Schools, abortion, turnout and pocketbooks*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:668B-2F91-JC3J-X118-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

August 29, 2022 Monday

Copyright 2022 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** politics\_policy\_in\_sunshine\_state

**Length:** 2847 words

**Byline:**  Mary Ellen Klas

Newsletters |

**Body**

It's Monday, Aug. 29, and we're off to the races for the 2022 mid-term in Florida.

Charlie Crist, the former Republican governor of Florida, defeated Agriculture Commissioner Nikki Fried with 60% of the vote in the Democratic primary and now faces Republican Gov. Ron DeSantis in the race for governor.

Orlando Congresswoman Val Demings easily won the Democratic primary for the U.S. Senate and now takes on incumbent Republican Sen. Marco Rubio.

With DeSantis and Rubio leading the GOP ticket, coupled with a surge in Republican voter registration and a pandemic-polarized political environment that has pushed the state to the right, GOP candidates enter the general election with more than the advantage of incumbency. They have a definite edge.

So, the obvious question: Is Florida still a swing state?

The primary provided us with some clues.

20220823 AD0446 Election Day.jpgGov. Ron DeSantis spoke at the "Keep Florida Free Tour" at Milander Center for the Arts & Entertainment in Hialeah on Tuesday.

Miami-Dade leans Republican: In Miami-Dade County, which still has a Democratic registration edge despite the party losing over 3.5% of its registered voters since 2018, two candidates for Miami-Dade County Commission backed by former President Donald Trump and the two Miami-Dade School Board candidates backed by Gov. Ron DeSantis all scored wins.

If Florida's largest county is performing for Republicans, where does that leave Democrats?

Abortion, the Dems cornerstone: Democrats are counting on galvanizing voters behind reproductive rights and are operating on the assumption that, unless defeated, the GOP-controlled executive and legislative branches will pass an outright ban in Florida.

An internal Democratic Governor's Association poll of likely general election voters, leaked to NBC News, found that DeSantis leads Crist by 5 percent points. But the race tightens if independent voters sour on DeSantis when they are told his views on abortion, property insurance and other cost of living issues.

Will GOP enact a full ban? Florida Republicans knew abortion would be a politically delicate issue for them earlier this year when, instead of taking the approach of Texas and some other states, the governor and legislators rejected an outright abortion ban and instead passed the 15-week abortion ban with no exception for rape or incest. Polls show the 15-week limit is unpopular with a majority of Floridians, but the governor has repeatedly avoided answering whether he supports a full abortion ban.

Elections photo grid template (21).pngIncumbent Rep. James Bush III faces a political newcomer, lawyer and former teacher Ashley Gantt in the Democratic primary for Florida House District 109.

Collateral damage: In Broward County, veteran Democratic state Rep. James Bush, who voted with Republicans to support the 15-week abortion ban and the bill barring classroom discussions about sexual orientation or gender identity, lost his reelection bid. Also defeated was Jared Smith, an incumbent circuit judge in Hillsborough County who gained notoriety when he rejected a teenager's request for an abortion because he deemed her not mature enough.

Enthusiasm edge: Primary elections in mid-term years are traditionally low voter turnout. This year, with only one statewide GOP primary on the ballot, the statewide voter turnout was slightly lower than four years ago, according to Florida's Department of State: 25.87%, compared to 27% in 2018.

But a Miami Herald analysis found that Republicans appear to have the advantage in voter enthusiasm and turned out their voters in significantly higher numbers in counties with the most Republicans registered, compared to the Democratic turnout in the counties Democrats dominated.

MIA\_Votingthreelnewcpj.JPGHialeah residents vote at the Hialeah Fire Station #5 during the Florida primary with help of poll workers on Tuesday, August 23, 2022.

Dems underperforming: In Miami-Dade County, for example, Democrats slightly underperformed Republicans in turnout. And in some rural North Florida counties, -- where conservative white voters are still registered as Democrats -- nearly 30% of the Democratic ballots in Liberty, Holmes, Union and Baker counties were either left blank or didn't vote for Crist or Fried.

It's about schools: With no statewide primary election for the governor, DeSantis turned his energy into politicizing dozens of non-partisan school board races . It was a good gamble.

Of the 30 conservative candidates backed by DeSantis and an unprecedented amount of cash he helped raise, 19 won their elections outright, five lost, and six are gearing up for runoff elections in November.

Charlie\_Karla\_MJO\_4.jpgCharlie Crist, the Democratic Party's candidate for Florida governor, and his newly announced running mate, Karla Hernández-Mats, react during a political rally at Hialeah Middle Community School on Saturday, Aug. 27, 2022, in Hialeah, Fla. Crist held the rally to announce that he selected Hernández-Mats, the president of United Teachers of Dade and a vice president of the American Federation of Teachers, as his running mate.

Crist counters with running mate: Three days after securing the Democratic nomination, Charlie Crist wasted no time to offer up a counter to DeSantis' efforts to control the debate over the future of Florida's schools. Crist named United Teachers of Dade President Karla Hernández-Mats as his running mate.

In a conventional election year, Hernández-Mats would be an unconventional choice: a special-education teacher with no previous experience in elected office and no statewide name recognition. But this is no ordinary election year and schools are the battlefield after DeSantis elevated his fight with school boards over ***mask*** mandates and sparked a feud over what he calls -- but has not defined --a "woke" agenda, and how racial and gender identity is taught in schools.

How independent will school boards be? A year ago, the Miami-Dade School Board, under then-Superintendent Alberto Carvalho, defied the governor's ban on school ***mask*** mandates, requiring students and staff to wear facial coverings for the start of the 2021-22 school year as the delta variant surged in the state.

Now, after Tuesday's elections that gave DeSantis-backed candidates 19 seats on several boards, the question is: Will the boards capitulate to political pressures in the future, or remain independent? It's an open question.

MIA\_EDU\_BROWARD\_SUPT\_SEARCH (4)La Junta Escolar del Condado de Broward durante una reunión de la junta para elegir al próximo superintendente el 9 de febrero de 2022.Fort Lauderdale, Florida, February 9, 2022 -

Broward suspensions: In response to the findings of a statewide grand jury that investigated the Broward school district's response to the 2018 Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School mass shooting, DeSantis suspended four Broward County School Board members for "incompetence, neglect of duty, and misuse of authority." He replaced the four women with four men.

AP22193786552529.jpgA woman pumps gas at a Sunoco mini-mart in Independence, Ohio, on Tuesday, July 12, 2022. (AP Photo/Gene J. Puskar)

Pocketbook issues: Hovering over the general election is the widespread uneasiness about the cost of living in Florida. In nearly every major national ranking on housing, energy, healthcare, property insurance and food, the cost for those basics in Florida is higher than it is in most other states.

Crist blames global forces, the pandemic and interrupted supply chains for inflation. DeSantis blames Biden for cost of living increases and says his efforts to keep businesses open during the pandemic rescued Florida's economy.

Property insurance: One festering problem, however, is the state of Florida's property insurance market. United Property & Casualty Insurance Co. announced last week it is the latest company to exit Florida's troubled homeowners' insurance market, forcing customers to find new coverage as their policies come up for renewal.

Toll road credits: DeSantis is sensitive to these worries. Two days after the primary, DeSantis announced what he estimated would be $40 million in discounts to commuters who frequently use the Florida Turnpike network. The roads are owned by the Florida Department of Transportation and do not include the Miami-Dade Expressway and Central Florida Expressway.

The program would begin in September and last for six months. It would be up to the Legislature to enact a permanent discount and expand it to other toll roads.

Where they stand: Here is a summary of DeSantis and Crist's public statements and promises to date on: reproductive rights, the environment, education, gun rights, the cost of living in Florida, and voting rights.

WHAT WE'RE WATCHING

LeadAsset\_PittsBurkeDLC.pngeff Pitts (izquierda), ex presidente ejecutivo de la consultora política Matrix, usó fondos de Florida Power & Light para respaldar al desconocido político Johnathan Burke (centro) en su intento de desbancar a ***Daniella Levine Cava*** (derecha) de la Comisión del Condado Miami-Dade en 2018.

More FPL malfeasance: Florida Power & Light's political consultants paid for a spoiler candidate's salary and rent as he challenged ***Daniella Levine Cava*** in the 2018 Miami-Dade County commissioner race. The scheme may have violated campaign finance law as the elaborate operation employed by FPL's consultants relied on a network of secretive nonprofits, out-of-state consultants, and shell corporations to shield the nation's largest electric company from being revealed as the source of millions of dollars in political funds used to influence the race.

AP22238563036871.jpgPresident Joe Biden listens during a meeting with state and local elected officials about reproductive health care, in the Roosevelt Room of the White House, Friday, Aug. 26, 2022, in Washington. (AP Photo/Evan Vucci)

Student loan relief: President Biden announced he would cancel up to to $10,000 in federal student loan debt for borrowers with an income of less than $125,000 for an individual and $250,000 for a household and up to $20,000 for Pell Grant borrowers. He also extended the pause on student loan repayments until Dec. 31.

According to the U.S. Department of Education, an estimated 90 percent of relief dollars will go to those earning less than $75,000.

Mixed reaction: How do Americans feel about the loan forgiveness plan? According to an Emerson College poll, the reaction has been very mixed: 36% think the $10,000 cancellation is too much, 35% think it is just the right amount, and 30% think it is not enough.

DeSantis, who owes at least $21,284.92 in outstanding debt but may not qualify under the Biden plan because his loans are privately held, said the president doesn't have the constitutional authority to call off the payments.MIA\_DeSantis\_Roundtable\_MJO\_8.JPGAttorney General Ashley Moody speaks during a roundtable discussion at the American Museum of the Cuban Diaspora in Miamis Coral Way neighborhood on Monday, February 7, 2022.

Other races to watch: The general election lineup for Florida's Cabinet races is set for November: established, well-funded -- and Donald Trump-endorsed -- Republicans will be running against Democrats facing long odds.

Aramis Ayala beat Daniel Uhlfelder and Jim Lewis in the Democratic primary for attorney general with nearly 45% of the vote. She will challenge Republican Attorney General Ashley Moody. In the race to become Florida's next agriculture commissioner, Democrat Naomi Blemur will face Republican Wilton Simpson, the president of the Florida Senate. Blemur, 43, who owns a business consulting firm, received several endorsements from prominent Democrats. And Democrat Adam Hattersley will face off against incumbent Republican Jimmy Patronis.

MIA\_104TadeoElect23NEWPPPFlorida State Senator Annette Taddeo celebrates with supporters at the Coconut Grove Sailing Club in Miami after defeating City of Miami Commissioner Ken Russell in the Democratic primary election to challenge Republican incumbent Maria Elvira Salazar to represent Florida's 27th Congressional District, on Tuesday August 23, 2022.

Florida state Sen. Annette Taddeo will challenge incumbent Republican María Elvira Salazar in what may be the only competitive congressional race in Miami, after both won their respective primary contests for Florida's 27th Congressional District.

Miami Gardens state Sen. Shevrin Jones fended off two challengers to represent Miami-Dade's Senate District 34. And Lauren Book, the Democratic leader in the Florida Senate, beat former Broward County Commissioner Barbara Sharief, after a hard-fought race.

Feds ask judge to reject Florida voter law: Parts of Florida's 2021 election law should be thrown out because it discriminates against Black voters, the U.S. Department of Justice said in a brief filed last week before the 11th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals. Chief U.S. District Judge Mark Walker ruled last year that the law is racially discriminatory . The law was enacted by Florida's Republican-controlled Legislature and signed by the governor in 2021 as GOP leaders across the country pushed to revamp elections laws after former President Donald Trump's loss in 2020.

110 DeSantis ***COVID***-19 Presser DS.jpgLieutenant Governor Jeanette Nunez talks to the media alongside Florida Governor Ron DeSantis during press conference to announces ***COVID***-19 antibody testing, mobile lab at Hard Rock Stadium as the Novel Coronavirus pandemic continues on Wednesday, May 6, 2020 in Miami Gardens.

Nuñez clarifies Cuba comment: After coming under attack by Democrats last week, Florida Lt. Gov. Jeanette Nuñez clarified her comments on Cuban migrants being bused to Delaware, saying there is a distinction between migrants here illegally and those who have refugee and asylum status. Nuñez's comments have renewed attention on a controversial immigration program DeSantis has vowed to implement but has yet to roll out.

At the governor's request, the Florida Department of Transportation has access to $12 million to contract with private transportation companies to bus undocumented immigrants out of the state. But last week, DeSantis suggested the program is on standby because of Texas efforts to bus migrants to Democrat-controlled states has "taken the pressure off" him to implement his program.

DeSantisGov. Ron DeSantis signed legislation to require mental-health crisis-intervention training for on-campus officers, among other school-safety measures.

Rising cost of protecting the governor: Floridians spent more than $6.097 million during the 2021-22 fiscal year on protective services for the Gov. Ron DeSantis and his family during the 2021-22 fiscal year, more than 25 percent more protecting than in the previous fiscal year, according to a new state report. The increase coincides with the governor's emergence as a national Republican celebrity, as he traveled to fundraisers and speaking engagements to position himself to run for president in 2024. There were $2.391 million for costs related to transportation.

ashley-biden-joe-biden-livelihood-today-170210-tease\_f3555e0b688d68c0cd580e5Joe Biden and daughter Ashley Biden attend the GILT and Ashley Biden celebration of the launch of exclusive Livelihood Collection at Spring Place on February 7, 2017 in New York City.

Gotta read this one: When Florida residents Aimee Harris and Robert Kurlander got access to he stolen diary and other possessions of Ashley Biden, daughter of the president, during the 2020 campaign, they immediately saw dollar signs. So they first tried to sell the purloined papers to Donald Trump's 2020 campaign. Then, they turned to Project Veritas, the conservative group that specializes in infiltrating news organizations. The group paid them $40,000 and investigators pounced. Harris and Kurlander now face up to five years in prison after pleading guilty to conspiring to transport stolen property across state lines.

IMG\_IMG\_0306161742.JPG\_2\_4\_1\_Q4FQCA6C\_L469323240.JPGHarold "Tex" Keith, outside his home at Ground Zero, on Aug. 24, 1992, in Florida City after Hurricane Andrew left the Homestead/Florida City area.

Remember Andrew: Hurricane Andrew roared ashore on Aug. 24, 1992 -- 30 years ago. The Category 5 storm changed lives in South Florida, destroyed homes and landmarks. And it left indelible memories of survival. Here's are five ways the storm forever changed South Florida. Here's our photo gallery.

Thank you for reading. Now WE HAVE SOME QUESTIONS! The Miami Herald is conducting a short survey of readers to help us better gauge interest in our politics coverage. We'd be grateful if you'd give it a look here.

Miami Herald Capitol Bureau Chief Mary Ellen Klas curates the Politics and Policy in the Sunshine State newsletter. We appreciate our readers and if you have any ideas or suggestions, please drop me a note at [*meklas@miamiherald.com*](mailto:meklas@miamiherald.com)

Please subscribe! We are offering a special offer for you: Unlimited digital access of just $1.99 a month for newsletter readers. Please check it out!

Know someone who'd like to get this free newsletter? Send this to a friend to receive it weekly.

**Load-Date:** August 29, 2022

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Will the 2 DeSantis-backed Miami school board members be independent? Some are asking*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6685-CY11-JC3J-X0FG-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

August 28, 2022 Sunday

Copyright 2022 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** education

**Length:** 2417 words

**Byline:**  Sommer Brugal

Miami Herald

**Body**

Around this time last year, the Miami-Dade School Board, under then-Superintendent Alberto Carvalho, defied Gov. Ron DeSantis and his ban on school ***mask*** mandates, requiring students and staff to wear facial coverings for the start of the 2021-22 school year as the delta variant surged in the state, fueling more than 20,000 new ***COVID*** cases a day.

At the time, Vice Chair Steve Gallon III said the public depended on the school board "to vote in a manner that does not capitulate to political pressures but relies on the empirical, scientific evidence." The board voted 7-1 in favor of the ***mask*** mandate, with board member Lubby Navarro dissenting and Christi Fraga absent.

This year, however, following Tuesday's elections resulting in two DeSantis-backed candidates winning a seat on the nine-member board, some are questioning how future School Board decisions could play out -- particularly when it comes to potentially politically divisive issues, such as the curriculum -- and whether the board can remain independent.

"When you have the kind of dollars coming into these local races that we saw come in, you have to assume that there are interests that go far beyond what the local community thinks should be part of the curriculum," said Anna Hochkammer, a Village of Pinecrest council member, district parent and a member of the Miami-Dade County Public Schools Audit and Budget Advisory Committee.

Overall, the four Miami-Dade School Board races this year garnered more than $1.137 million in campaign contributions with nine candidates running. In 2020, 22 candidates amassed nearly $2.163 million.

Board members who see the money and influence intervening in a local election, especially one that is nonpartisan as school districts' budgets come from local property taxes, could "think twice about voting against the interests of the state's executives," Hochkammer said.

READ MORE: DeSantis suspends four Broward County School Board members, appoints replacements

2 DeSantis-backed candidates win in school board election

The District 8 race, in particular, which pinned longtime incumbent Marta Pérez, 71, against Monica Colucci, 49, brought in nearly $494,000, more than any of the other three School Board races, campaign finance documents show. The governor, a Republican, endorsed Colucci while Lt. Gov. Jeanette Nuñez celebrated by her side at her victory party Tuesday night at Renaissance Ballrooms in West Miami. (Colucci raised $211,517, while Pérez raised $281,710.)

MIA\_MDSCPRIMARY\_COLUCCIAS01 (4)Monica Colucci, right, and Florida Lt. Gov. Jeanette Nuñez, left, hug supporters during Colucci's victory party at the Renaissance Ballrooms on Tuesday, Aug. 23, 2022, in West Miami. Colucci won the Miami-Dade School Board District 8 seat during the primary election, defeating longtime incumbent Marta Perez.

Colucci, an elementary school teacher with the district, edged out Pérez, who'd been in the seat since 1998, with 54% of the vote, compared to Pérez's 46%.

Roberto Alonso, 41, a businessman and Miami-Dade College Board of Trustees member whom DeSantis appointed in 2020, won the open seat vacated by outgoing School Board Chair Perla Tabares Hantman, who held the District 4 seat for nearly three decades and served as chair for 14 terms (nonconsecutive). Desantis backed Alonso, who does not have a teaching background, in the race.

Alonso brought in nearly $165,000, compared with about $45,000 that Maribel Balbin, the former head of the Miami-Dade chapter of the League of Women Voters, raised in the race. The third candidate, Kevin Menendez Macki, a former district teacher and now principal of a local Christian school, raised nearly $29,000.

READ MORE: Two DeSantis-backed Miami school board candidates win, one edging out a longtime incumbent

Both Colucci and Alonso received donations from high-ranking political figures and organizations, according to campaign finance records: Colucci from Nuñez, and Alonso from political action committees, including Friends of Ron DeSantis.

Both received donations from Moms for Liberty, a DeSantis-aligned conservative parents' rights organization whose political action committee's main source of funding was Publix heiress Julie Jenkins Fancelli, who donated $650,000 to three organizations instrumental in the Jan. 6 rally Trump held before the riots at the Capitol, according to a Washington Post investigation.

READ MORE: Publix heiress funds Florida school board races through Moms for Liberty PAC

The other two School Board races this year -- District 2 and District 6 -- brought in nearly $131,700 and about $273,500, respectively.

Incumbent Dorothy Bendross-Mindingall beat La-Shanda West, a teacher at Cutler Bay Senior High, with 75% of the vote to keep her District 2 seat, which represents Liberty City, Overtown, Little Haiti, Wynwood, Morningside, El Portal and Miami Shores. Bendross-Mindingall is a former teacher and principal.

ea603322-ec8a-4583-bcba-f1563ce91ba9.pngIncumbent Dorothy Bendross-Mindingall won her District 2 seat Tuesday in the Miami-Dade School Board elections.

In District 6, incumbent Maria Teresa Rojas kept her District 6 seat with 64% of the vote. Rojas, who is the sister-in-law of Carlos Gimenez, the former Miami-Dade mayor and now a GOP U.S. House representative, defeated Sandra Manzieri, a teacher at Key Biscayne K-8 Center, to represent Coconut Grove, Key Biscayne, Coral Gables, South Miami, Little Havana and parts of southwest Miami-Dade. Rojas is a former principal at Sunset Elementary.

RojasIncumbent Maria Teresa 'Mari Tere' Rojas won the Miami-Dade School Board District 6 seat Tuesday, Aug. 23, 2022.

Despite the support some candidates received from politicians, Alex Penelas, the former two-term Miami-Dade mayor, said the public should give the incoming board members "the benefit of the doubt." And that's especially true for Alonso, whom Penelas supported. (Florida Value Partners, which Penelas is an investor in but is not a managing member who dictates who receives donations, he said, donated $4,000 to Alonso's campaign, records show.)

The salary for a Miami-Dade School Board member, elected to a four-year term, is $46,773, according to the Miami-Dade Elections Department.

Penelas: Give Alonso a chance to show independence

In District 4, "only a DeSantis-supported candidate would have won," said Penelas. The district covers a large swath of northwest Miami-Dade, including Miami Lakes and the GOP stronghold of Hialeah.

But, Penelas added, when it comes to Alonso's decision-making, "Time will tell whether he's only going to be a spokesman for the governor or if he's going to be an independent thinker, and we've expressed those concerns."

Penelas, who's been a friend of Alonso and his family for more than three decades, said Alonso has broken with the party in the past and proven on various occasions to act independently. Alonso, he added, has "earned a chance to prove his skeptics wrong."

Hochkammer, however, was more hesitant.

"These are not grassroots candidates. These are ideological candidates," she said. "To expect ideologically indebted people on the board to suddenly discover their backbone when faced with the deep pockets of Gov. DeDantis is beyond naive."

Alonso's connections to Manny Diaz

In addition to his relationship to DeSantis, Alonso also has a longstanding relationship with Florida Education Commissioner Manny Diaz Jr., who celebrated Alonso's victory Tuesday at Paraiso Tropical in Hialeah. At the party, the commissioner told the Herald he and Alonso were good friends and that he wasn't surprised by the election's outcome.

MIA\_MSDPRIMARYALONSO-Local0 (2)Miami, Florida, August 23, 2022 - Roberto Alonso, left, is congratulated by Manny Diaz Jr., the Florida Commissioner of Education, during a celebration party at Paraiso Tropical in Hialeah. Alonso, endorsed by Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, won the District 4 seat to the Miami-Dade School Board. The seat was open after the longtime board chair Perla Tabares Hantman chose not to run for reelection.

When asked on Thursday how the commissioner would balance his personal and professional relationship with Alonso to ensure there would be no conflict, Alex Lanfranconi, the director of communications for the Florida Department of Education, said in an email, that "all school board members serve as constitutional officers elected by the people. Any insinuation of a conflict of interest based upon personal friendship is both comical and shameful."

Colucci's connections to lieutenant governor

Colucci has the political backing of Nuñez, the Florida lieutenant governor.

Nuñez's aligned political committee, Jobs for Prosperity for Florida, paid for political mail advertisements sent to voters to promote Colucci's candidacy and contributed $1,000 to Colucci's campaign, according to campaign finance records. Colucci left teaching to work in the governor's executive office from February 2019 to August 2020 as the special assistant to Nuñez, but the two have been friends since their college years at Florida International University.

For their part, both Alonso and Colucci have maintained they will act independently from the governor.

Colucci couldn't be reached on Friday, but in an interview with the Herald's Editorial Board in June, said she prides herself on being an independent thinker "because that's what I instill in my students. [But] If I agree with someone, that's what it is, and I am in agreement with the governor's platform."

Alonso rejected that he will be beholden to the governor's agenda, he told the Herald Friday. The only group of people influencing him will be those in District 4, who lean conservative and often align with the views of DeSantis, he said. Moreover, he defended his relationship with Tallahassee and said it will benefit the school community.

There's never been a governor in Florida as invested, or involved, in education, he said, and while some can argue the political nature of it, he believes the interest from Tallahassee can be wielded to improve schools, increase teacher pay and provide schools with the latest technology.

READ MORE: Teachers alarmed by state's infusing religion, downplaying race in civics training

Many have strongly criticized the governor's involvement in schools.

In March, several politicians -- including Miami-Dade County Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava***, State Sen. Shevrin Jones, a Miami Gardens Democrat, and former Florida governor and U.S. Rep. Charlie Crist, who won his primary race Tuesday to challenge DeSantis in the November election for governor -- condemned DeSantis for signing the "Parental Rights in Education." Critics have dubbed the measure Florida's "Don't Say Gay" bill, which bars discussions of sexuality and gender identity in kindergarten through third grade in Florida public schools.

READ MORE: 'It's a sad day for education.' Miami teachers react to passing of 'Don't Say Gay' bill

More recently, teachers across South Florida raised concerns that a new state civics initiative spearheaded by the administration and designed to prepare students to be "virtuous citizens" was infused with a Christian and conservative ideology.

READ MORE: Teachers alarmed by state's infusing religion, downplaying race in civics training

DeSantis' education agenda

Tuesday's election results follow DeSantis' decision to make education -- and controversial education issues -- part of his political platform.

In addition to singing the "Parental Rights in Education" bill in the spring, the governor also signed a law that limits how race and racism is taught in universities and in workplace training. A federal judge earlier this month blocked the restrictions related to workplace training, saying that portion of the law violates the First Amendment.

The measures have been particularly troublesome for many teachers, who fear they inhibit their teaching and strip away their creativity.

READ MORE: Between politics and poor pay, teachers are more strained than ever -- and the numbers show it

Despite the two new board members' political connections, Gallon, the board's vice chair, told the Herald he isn't "looking to anticipate one's personal or political ideology."

Instead, he has the "utmost confidence" both Alonso and Colucci will aim to serve in the best interest of their communities and the district," he said. "I maintain the premise and believe that those who choose to serve, especially in education, do so on behalf and in the interest of students. The outcome of [the] election has not changed my optimism and outlook in this belief."

The fight over the sex-ed textbook

The election comes just weeks after the board flip-flopped on a decision to adopt a comprehensive sexual-health textbook that a small group of parents raised objections over the age-appropriateness of the sex education content.

The board first adopted the book, but after concerns were raised -- an effort led by by Alex Serrano, the county director for County Citizens Defending Freedom, a national organization with ties to conservative and politically active Christian groups -- an independent review process was conducted by a district hearing officer, who later recommended that the School Board adopt the book.

READ MORE: This group got sex-ed textbook pulled. Leader linked to controversial Miami private school

The school board rejected the recommendations of the hearing officer, whom Superintendent Jose Dotres had appointed to review the matter, and voted 5-4 at the end of July to essentially ban the sex-ed textbook. (District officials said Friday Dotres was not available to comment.)

A week later, Tabares Hantman, whom Alonso is succeeding, in a surprise move, switched her vote in favor of the book. Pérez, however, remained against the book.

Despite Tabares Hantman switching her vote, she and Pérez have had a conservative voting record during their decades-long tenures.

That's why, for this election, Penelas argued, the issue wasn't so much about their politics, but whether or not the two candidates backed by DeSantis -- Alonso and Colucci -- were willing to support the governor's agenda or break free of him if they disagreed.

"When it comes down to issues in Miami-Dade County that impacts schoolchildren here, are they going to be sufficiently independent to stand up and vote the way they should on that particular issue or will they have to vote the way the governor wants them to vote?" asked Penelas, who was once a rising star in the Democratic Party of Florida. "And that worries a lot of people."

**Load-Date:** August 28, 2022

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Primary week: DeSantis wants to teach schools a lesson; Nuñez says bus illegal Cubans; elections police make arrests*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:666V-86P1-DYJM-M1H5-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

August 22, 2022 Monday

Copyright 2022 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** politics\_policy\_in\_sunshine\_state

**Length:** 2481 words

**Byline:**  Mary Ellen Klas

Newsletters |

**Body**

It's Monday, Aug. 22, and this is the Florida goes to the polls edition.

By the end of the day on Sunday, voter turnout in Florida was at about 15%, with about 100,000 more people casting ballots at the end of early voting for the primary election than in 2018, according to University of Florida's elections expert Michael McDonald who analyzed the Division of Election's report.

About 554,000 in-person votes and 1.5 million vote by mail ballots have been cast so far. Candidates crisscrossed their districts and "Souls to the Polls" events resumed across the state, amid worries about increased voter suppression.

MIA\_104aSoulPolls20NEWPPPDr. Tracy Stallworth joined in a pray with a group of voters from churches and community organizations from Miami-Dade County that gathered at the parking lot of the Calder Casino before biking and driving over to the North Dade Regional Library in Miami Gardens as part of the "Souls to the Polls Caravan" 2022, on Saturday August 20, 2022.

A lot is at stake: When all the polls close Tuesday at 7 p.m. and the votes are counted, we will know which Democratic contender will take on Gov. Ron DeSantis and the state's other GOP incumbents for attorney general, chief financial officer and the open seat for agriculture commissioner. There will be a few state House seats settled and we will also learn the line-up for the few competitive state Senate seats.

GOP registration gains: The number of active voters registered as Republicans surpassed Democrats for the first time in recent history this year. Although the percentage of no party-affiliated voters keeps growing, the G.O.P.'s lead in Florida continues to expand. See the county breakdowns for how party affiliation, based on registered voters, has changed in Florida with our maps here.

Voter guide: And for more information about candidates on the primary ballot in South Florida, check out the Miami Herald's voter's guide here.

Who will be the Dem nominee? Meanwhile, the race for governor has become a referendum on DeSantis and his governing ideology. Congressman Charlie Crist and Agriculture Commissioner Nikki Fried battle over who is better positioned to defeat the governor, who is largely seen to be a top presidential contender among his party's right-leaning base.

IMG\_MIA\_DeSantis\_Roundta\_7\_1\_K4LRA2QO\_L707229438.JPGGovernor Ron DeSantis, far-right, and Lieutenant Governor Jeanette Nuñez, left of DeSantis, attend a roundtable discussion at the American Museum of the Cuban Diaspora in Miami's Coral Way neighborhood on Monday, February 7, 2022.

Busing Cubans to Delaware? Florida Lt. Gov. Jeanette Nuñez, a Cuban-American Republican from Miami, is getting attention over one ideological issue important to the base -- immigration -- when she appeared to suggest on a conservative AM radio show over the weekend that DeSantis was planning to bus Cubans who were in Florida "illegally" to Delaware, the home state of the president.

DeSantis has proposed removing "unauthorized aliens" from the state and, while legislators approved $12 million in funds, the Florida Department of Transportation has yet to release details on how the busing program would work.

WHAT WE'RE WATCHING

Education politics: The governor spent Sunday traveling the state adding his political spin to non-partisan school board races by making 29 endorsements. He began the day in Miami-Dade, traveled to Sarasota, and ended in Jacksonville.

Speaking to a crowd of about 250 in Doral, the governor touted what he believed to be legislative wins for education in the state: laws that limit how race, racism and gender are discussed in classrooms, boost parents' role in classrooms and place a greater focus on civics. About 40 protesters gathered outside with signs to denounce the governor and his education agenda.

MIA\_11EDUDESANTISEDUTOURPolice stand by as protesters gather across the street during Gov. Ron DeSantis' campaign event in support of school board candidates he endorses and his education agenda, Sunday, August 21, 2022 at the Metro-Dade Firefighters Local 1403 in Doral, Florida.

In Sarasota, DeSantis spoke for about 45 minutes as protesters outside called the governor "DeSatan," and held signs mocking his focus on "woke" ideology. And in Jacksonville, the governor blasted "leftist" school board members who defended ***mask*** mandates in schools during the height of the pandemic.

023 DOUGLAS OPEN HOUSE DS.JPGMourners bring flowers as they pay tribute at a memorial for the victims of the shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School on Sunday, Feb. 25, 2018. Parents and students returned to the school for the first time since 17 people were killed in a mass shooting at the school in Parkland on Feb. 14.

Grand jury wants Broward officials removed: If a Florida grand jury has its way, there will be more openings on school boards. The grand jury tasked with investigating Broward County Public Schools after the Parkland mass shooting released a lengthy report that recommends the removal of five school board members, four of whom are still appointed. The 122-page report accuses the the five members of mishandling millions of dollars meant for school safety as well as neglecting their duty.

Teacher firing: The Broward County School Board got at least one win last week, however, when an administrative law judge backed its decision to fire a science teacher who refused last year to comply with a ***mask*** requirement aimed at curbing the spread of ***COVID***-19.

Restricting journalists: DeSantis had a busy week making the rounds outside the state in a two-day, four-state tour of battleground states, sponsored by the conservative nonprofit Turning Points Action. In Ohio, the group demanded that journalists covering a rally featuring DeSantis and Senate candidate J.D. Vance give organizers access to any footage they took, attempting to strip them of their role as independent watchdogs.

US-NEWS-CPAC-CONFERENCE-1ST-LEDE-OS.JPGFlorida Gov. Ron DeSantis delivers remarks at the 2022 CPAC conference in Orlando on Feb. 24.

Fighting 'woke': And in a packed ballroom in Pittsburgh on Friday, DeSantis spoke for 45 minutes at a rally for Doug Mastriano, the Republican candidate for governor who brought busloads of supporters to D.C. on Jan. 6, 2021 and organized a slate of fake electors.

DeSantis told the crowd "we must fight the woke agenda" and touted the legislation he signed that bans schools from teaching students about the history of societal privilege and oppression based on race or gender.

Jewish leaders condemn: Jewish leaders joined religious groups in Pennsylvania who condemned DeSantis for appearing with Mastriano because of Mastriano's ties to Gab, a right-wing social media site that has come under fire for its antisemitic and racist commentary.

Losing part of 'woke' in court: The governor did not tell his audienes that several of his initiatives have been blocked in federal court. The latest came Thursday when a federal judge threw out part of the law, known as the Stop WOKE Act, calling the restriction on businesses an unconstitutional infringement on First Amendment rights. That ruling came on the same day that a group of university professors and a university student filed a federal lawsuit challenging another part of the law restricting how race-related concepts are addressed in education. Another education-related challenge also is pending in federal court.

liz-cheney.jpegIn this April 20, 2021, photo, House Republican Conference Chair Rep. Liz Cheney, R-Wyo., speaks to reporters after a GOP meeting at the Capitol in Washington. (J. Scott Applewhite | AP Photo)

Cheney scolds DeSantis: Although DeSantis has avoided repeating false claims about fraud in the 2020 presidential election, his embrace of election deniers like Mastriano, and Arizona's Kari Lake, drew the rebuke of defeated Wyoming Congresswoman Liz Cheney on Sunday. She said DeSantis' strategy "is something that I think people got to have real pause about ... either you fundamentally believe our constitutional structure or you don't."

WHAT WE'RE TALKING ABOUT

MIA\_fl-ne-desantis-fort-lauderdale-081822-04-081822-FL0125277076Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis said at the Broward County Courthouse on Thursday: 'If there are certain rules and regulations in place, if people don't think that those are going to be enforced, you're going to have more violations.'

Will arrests restore trust among election deniers? That is the question coming into sharper focus as DeSantis last week announced the arrest of 20 individuals on charges of voting illegally in 2020 because they had been convicted of murder or sexual assault and not had their rights restored. Because voter fraud is a low-impact crime that occurs at a statistically low rate in Florida, voting rights activists said the intent was to target and intimidate minority voters. Others suggest it's an attempt to show election doubters, who could raise questions about this year's results, that Florida is cracking down on voter fraud.

(Notably absent, however, is any attempt to crack down on election fraud perpetrated by the backers of the ghost candidate scandal or the Republican Party canvassers who illegally switched the party affiliations of more than 100 elderly Miami-Dade residents without their consent.)

Confused and mislead: Five of the voters who were arrested told the Miami Herald they registered to vote thinking the law allowed them to and they assumed they were free to cast ballots when their voter registration forms were approved. Nathan Hart, for example, said he was renewing his driver's license when a man at a voter registration booth convinced him, mistakenly, he was eligible to vote.

dlc photo 0820.jpgMiami-Dade Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** speaks to the media before voting at the Coral Reef Library early voting site near Palmetto Bay on Saturday, Aug. 20, 2022. To her left is Charlie Crist, a Democratic member of Congress running for governor, and Annette Taddeo, a Democratic member of the Florida Senate running for Congress.

'No coincidence': The timing of the announcement was immediately called into question. Miami-Dade County Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** said it was "no coincidence" the governor chose to announce voter fraud arrests days before the Aug. 23 election. "This moment was chosen, even though, probably, the state knew about it for a while," she said Friday, suggesting the intent was voter intimidation.

Side by side\_fittedNikki Fried and Charlie Crist

Late money going to Fried and Crist: Crist received a last-minute $500,000 boost from the American Federation of Teachers, a union representing 1.7 million members while Fried received at least $425,000 from Mike Fernandez, the billionaire South Florida private equity investor who was a major donor to Jeb Bush's 2016 presidential campaign.

Val Demings spends big: Democratic Rep. Val Demings has outspent GOP U.S. Sen. Marco Rubio on ads by a greater than two-to-one ratio, according to data provided by two organizations tracking political advertising in the state. The difference is even greater in some vote-heavy areas, including Miami and Orlando, the data show.

gaming compact signed.jpgEl gobernador Ron DeSantis y Marcellus Osceola Jr., presidente de la tribu seminole, muestran el pacto de juegos de azar que firmaron en abril.

Shifting arguments on sports betting: In a peculiar shift in position, the Department of Interior has revised its argument on Florida's gambling compact with the Seminole Trige and last week filed a brief now saying that it has no role in rejecting a sports betting compact if the games occur on tribal lands. The DOI had previously argued that it authorizes online sports betting if bets are deemed to do occur on Indian land.

A federal judge ruled last December that the deal violated the federal Indian Gaming Regulatory Act, which regulates gambling on tribal lands, because it allowed gambling off property owned by the Seminoles. Now, the feds are asking an appeals court to reinstate the deal and the Seminole Tribe control of sports betting throughout Florida.

Central\_v\_Northwestern\_Final\_MJO\_62.jpgNorthwestern Bulls pray before the start of their football game against the Miami Central Rockets on Friday, Oct. 1, 2021, at Nathaniel Traz Powell Stadium in Miami, Florida. The issue in Cambridge Christian's legal fight isn't players praying together on the field, it's having access to the stadium's public-address system to broadcast a pregame prayer to all in attendance.

More politics of education: The Florida Department of Education is backing Cambridge Christian School in Tampa in a legal battle about whether the school should have been allowed to offer a prayer over a stadium loudspeaker before a 2015 football championship game.

Must watch: No matter what side of the issue you are on this, MSNBC's Alex Wagner and Columbia University's Jelani Cobb break down the arguments for and against the push to revise teacher training as it relates to gender and race in Florida. It's worth a look.

AP\_070703038847The eleventh edition of Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary is seen stacked on other dictionaries at the company's headquarters in Springfield, Mass., Tuesday, July 3, 2007.

Odd stuff: The Sarasota County School District has stopped all donations and purchases of books for school libraries -- including hundreds of dictionaries -- because it says it wants additional guidance from the Florida Department of Education about how to navigate the effects of the new restrictions on what's acceptable in the classroom.

AP\_100215156868.jpgFlorida's prison system does not track the number of inmates treated for overdoses, the Department of Corrections says. A synthetic cannabinoid, known as K2 or "twak," is one of the drugs that is most frequently confiscated by prison staff.

Florida prisons banned visitors, found more drugs: Despite ban on visitors in Florida prisons during pandemic, drug confiscations rose during that time, prompting the questions: Are staff working with gangs to smuggle in drugs? Is the problem rampant? What's being done?

Good news: Florida's unemployment rate dipped to 2.7% in July, matching the level before the ***COVID***-19 pandemic and down from 2.8% in June.

Thank you for reading. Now WE HAVE SOME QUESTIONS! The Miami Herald is conducting a short survey of readers to help us better gauge interest in our politics coverage. We'd be grateful if you'd give it a look here.

Miami Herald Capitol Bureau Chief Mary Ellen Klas curates the Politics and Policy in the Sunshine State newsletter. We appreciate our readers and if you have any ideas or suggestions, please drop me a note at [*meklas@miamiherald.com*](mailto:meklas@miamiherald.com)

Please subscribe! We are offering a special offer for you: Unlimited digital access of just $1.99 a month for newsletter readers. Please check it out!

Know someone who'd like to get this free newsletter? Send this to a friend to receive it weekly.

**Load-Date:** August 22, 2022

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Miami-Dade to open two free monkeypox vaccine sites to counter growing outbreak*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:664R-W341-DYJM-M0TN-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

August 10, 2022 Wednesday

Copyright 2022 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** health\_care

**Length:** 1243 words

**Byline:**  Grethel Aguila and Michelle Marchante

Miami Herald

**Body**

Miami-Dade County is opening its first two monkeypox vaccination sites at Tropical Park and in Miami Beach to counter the growing number of cases in the recently declared U.S. public health emergency, county officials said Wednesday.

The ***vaccine*** sites will open Friday, although people can register for an appointment in advance by going to miamidade.gov/monkeypox or by calling 1-833-875-0900. The vaccines will be free but for high-risk people only. More than 600 appointments had been made as of Wednesday afternoon.

READ MORE: Here's how to sign up for monkeypox vaccines in Miami-Dade

Miami-Dade had 404 confirmed and probable monkeypox cases as of Tuesday, Miami-Dade County Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** said at a Wednesday press conference to discuss how the county was combating monkeypox, which the federal government declared a public health emergency on Aug. 4. The county has seen a doubling of cases over the past few weeks.

The U.S. monkeybox outbreak started at the end of May; as of Tuesday, there were 9,492 confirmed cases across the country, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

To open the ***vaccine*** sites, the county is partnering with Nomi Health, the company the county contracted to handle ***COVID***-19 testing and vaccines. The two ***vaccine*** sites will be at Tropical Park off Southwest 79th Avenue and Bird Road and a mobile site at 224 23rd St. in Miami Beach. The Tropical Park site will be separate from the ***COVID***-19 testing and ***vaccine*** sites; signage will direct people to it, county officials said.

IMG\_5971.jpegSignage at Tropical Park on the first day Miami-Dade began providing free monkeypox vaccines at two county sites via Nomi Health to at-risk patients who made appointments on Aug. 12, 2022.

READ MORE: Urgent updates on monkeypox: Where to get vaccines, how it spreads, ways to reduce risk

The county has received 1,000 vials from the federal government, Levine Cava said. With the monkeypox ***vaccine*** in short supply, federal health officials announced Tuesday the JYNNEOS ***vaccine*** can be administered between skin layers, as opposed to in the fat layer beneath the skin. In so doing, only a fifth of the full dose will be used, enabling the county to offer five times the number of ***vaccine*** doses.

On Tuesday, the Food and Drug Administration issued an Emergency Use Authorization to authorize the new dosing for those 18 and over and considered high risk. The FDA also on Tuesday allowed children to receive the ***vaccine*** under emergency use authorization, if they are at high risk.

Miami-Dade, Broward have most Florida cases

Levine Cava said she wrote a letter to the Florida Department of Health asking for more monkeypox vaccines. Miami-Dade and Broward counties have been the epicenter of the monkeypox outbreak in Florida.

With Miami-Dade's 404 confirmed and probable cases, and Broward's 359, the two counties accounted for 763 confirmed and probable cases as of Tuesday, or 75 percent of the state's 1,020 cases, the Florida Department of Health reported.

Monkeypoxcounty

People considered at high risk for monkeypox include some lab and healthcare workers; those in close contact with people who have had monkeypox; gay or bisexual men who've had a recent history of sexually transmittable diseases; and those living with HIV, the virus that causes AIDS.

On Monday, the CDC published new data that showed 99 percent of U.S. monkeypox cases have been in males, and 94 percent of the cases stem from recent men-to-men sexual or intimate contact, according to the CDC's Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report. The federal health agency examined U.S. cases between May 17 and July 22.

Monkeypox, which is manifested through painful lesions, can spread through contact with the infectious rash, scabs or body fluids of someone who is infected with the virus. It also can be transmitted via "respiratory secretions during prolonged, face-to-face contact, or during intimate physical contact" with a symptomatic person, according to the CDC.

Monkeypoxage

In Miami-Dade, the ***vaccine*** will be administered in two doses separated by four weeks, Levine Cava said. The county is aiming to offer testing at the sites. Testing, which is done by lesion swabs, may start next week, a county official said.

"It's real," Levine Cava said. "It's serious. And it's here."

MIA\_02-MONKEYPOX-PRESSER-Miami-Dade County Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** holds a press conference to discuss Miami-Dade's monkeypox infection rate and the county's response to the outbreak. The press conference was held at the new monkeypox vaccination site in Miami Beach, Florida on Wednesday, Aug. 10, 2022. The site will open on Friday, along with a monkeypox ***vaccine*** site at Tropical Park.

The county opened the Miami Beach site due to the city's large concentration of vulnerable residents, Miami-Dade Commissioner Eileen Higgins said. The site is near the library and accessible by public transportation.

"The supply is limited," Higgins said. "But send us an appointment. We'll make sure you're on the list."

Close contact of infected person increases risk

While most monkeypox cases are tied to sexual transmission, the virus can be transmitted through close contact, said Dr. Lilian Abbo, an infectious disease specialist at Jackson Health System. That means family, loved ones and those living with an infected person can get monkeypox. Those infected should isolate until their lesions heal, and then get vaccinated.

"Do not come with monkeypox to the ***vaccine*** site. You can't have lesions," she said.

MIA\_05MONKEYPOXPRESSERDr. Lilian Abbo, an infectious disease specialist at Jackson Health System, discusses the importance of getting vaccinated for monkeypox if you have come in close contact with an infected person. Miami-Dade Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava***, right, convened the press conference Wednesday to announce the county would open two monkeypox ***vaccine*** sites, at Tropical Park and in Miami Beach, on Friday, Aug. 12.

Miami-Dade cases have doubled over the past few weeks with the outbreak tied to several social activities, she said. A health department representative wasn't present to elaborate on the surging cases' sources and the Florida Department of Health did not respond to queries from the Herald.

"We don't want this to be another ***COVID***," Abbo said. "It doesn't need to be an endemic disease. We can stop the transmission."

Testing can be a challenge, however. Some patients have anal lesions and genital pain, but testing is done only on visible skin lesions.

As a gay man, Orlando Gonzalez is relieved monkeypox vaccines will now be available in Miami-Dade.

The LGBTQ community is often afraid when outbreaks like monkeypox happen because of the HIV/AIDS epidemic, said Gonzalez, executive director of SAVE LGBTQ and vice chair of the county's LGBTQ advisory board.

"We know for sure that our community was impacted first, but this is not a gay condition," Gonzalez said. "It's a condition that impacts everyone."

IMG\_5969.jpgPatients who had appointments line up at Tropical Park's monkeypox vaccination site at noon on the first day Miami-Dade opened a Nomi vaccination site at the park to offer the Jynneos ***vaccine*** on Aug. 12, 2022.

IMG\_5973.jpgA Nomi nurse prepares to inject a patient with a dose of the Jynneos monkeypox ***vaccine*** at Tropical Park as part of Miami-Dade's plans to combat the spread on Aug. 12, 2022. The ***vaccine*** requires two doses 28 days apart.

Miami Herald AAAS/AMS Mass Media Fellow Anuraag Bukkuri contributed to this report..

**Load-Date:** August 12, 2022

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Updates on monkeypox: Where to get vaccines, how it spreads, ways to reduce risk*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:664R-W341-DYJM-M0VP-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

August 10, 2022 Wednesday

Copyright 2022 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** health\_fitness

**Length:** 1289 words

**Byline:**  Michelle Marchante and Howard Cohen

Miami Herald

**Body**

Miami-Dade and Broward counties have become the epicenter of the monkeypox outbreak in Florida, with more than 700 confirmed and probable cases.

Monkeypox is similar to smallpox, though milder and less fatal. Many of the cases in this current outbreak involve men who have sex with men, but anyone can get the disease. And while two vaccines exist, supply is stretched.

But what exactly is monkeypox? How does it spread? Where can you get vaccines and tests in South Florida? And with so much information coming at us, how can you tell fact from fiction?

Here's a Miami Herald guide to help:

IMG\_5969.jpgPatients who had appointments line up at Tropical Park's monkeypox vaccination site at noon on the first day Miami-Dade opened a Nomi vaccination site at the park to offer the Jynneos ***vaccine*** on Aug. 12, 2022.

Monkeypox cases in Florida and the United States

Florida has recorded more than 900 confirmed cases of monkeypox since the U.S. outbreak began in May, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. In the U.S., there are more than 9,000 confirmed cases.

Here's a state-by-state breakdown. Keep in mind that the map, which uses CDC data, automatically updates and may have a lag.

HiGeorge Monkeypox

Who can get a monkeypox ***vaccine***? Where can you get a dose in South Florida?

IMG\_5973.jpgA Nomi nurse prepares to inject a patient with a dose of the Jynneos monkeypox ***vaccine*** at Tropical Park as part of Miami-Dade's plans to combat the spread on Aug. 12, 2022. The ***vaccine*** requires two doses 28 days apart.

The U.S. is struggling to meet demand for Jynneos, a two-dose ***vaccine*** that was designed to prevent monkeypox. U.S. officials say smallpox ***vaccine*** ACAM2000 can also be used to help prevent monkeypox, but has more side effects and cannot be given to people who are immunocompromised or have certain health conditions.

To try and meet demand for the preferred Jynneos monkeypox vaccines, the U.S. Food & Drug Administration has granted an emergency use authorization for Jynneos to be injected just under the skin rather than into deeper tissue for people 18 and older who are considered to be high risk for the disease. This injection process requires less dosage, which in turn, will let providers vaccinate more people, while still providing protection, health officials said at a White House briefing.

Younger people can also get the ***vaccine*** if they are deemed high risk, though they should receive the traditional injection, which usually boosts the immune system better, according to The Associated Press.

How to prevent the spread of monkeypox, according to Miami-Dade's interim chief medical officerLilian Abbo, interim chief medical officer for Miami-Dade County, talked about best practices to prevent the spread of monkeypox during a press conference in Miami Beach on Aug. 10, 2022.

READ NEXT: Monkeypox has been declared a global emergency. Should you get a ***vaccine***? And which one?

In South Florida, limited Jynneos vaccination appointments are now available in Miami-Dade County for people who are considered to be high risk for the disease. To be fully vaccinated, you'll need to get two doses, 28 days apart.

People considered to be high risk include:

Laboratory personnel and selected healthcare personnel at high-risk for infection.

People who have had a close contact with someone who has monkeypox.

Immunocompromised men who have sex with other men with HIV.

Other men, who also have sex with other men, and have a recent history of sexually transmissible diseases.

Appointments can be made at miamidade.gov/monkeypox or calling 833-875-0900. ***Vaccine*** sites are in Miami Beach, 224 23rd St., and at Tropical Park, 7900 SW 40th St., and at Zoo Miami, 12400 SW 152nd St. in Kendall.

Miami-Dade to open two free monkeypox ***vaccine*** sites to counter growing outbreak

Broward's health department has been partnering with organizations such as The Pride Center at Equality Park and Latinos Salud to help distribute its limited ***vaccine*** supply. Check for an appointment online.

READ MORE: Here's where you can get a ***vaccine*** or test for meningitis or monkeypox

Learn more about how to get a monkeypox ***vaccine*** in Miami-Dade CountyMayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** provided an update on Miami-Dade County's efforts to curb the spread of monkeypox, including new vaccination and testing sites.

How does monkeypox spread? What are the symptoms

Embed: Howard Cohen monkeypox tweet

Monkeypox can spread through intimate contact, such as kissing and sex, by contact with the rash, body fluids, respiratory secretions or by touching contaminated objects, such as clothing and bedding.

Symptoms include fever, painful pimple-like rashes and swollen lymph nodes. People diagnosed with monkeypox should isolate at home until all symptoms are gone. This includes waiting for the rashes turned scabs to fall and for new skin to form. The CDC says all of this can take between two to four weeks.

People diagnosed with the disease can get a lesion on or near their genitals or butt, as well as other areas of their body like hands, feet, chest, face or mouth. If you think you might have monkeypox, contact your doctor. Some providers may also be offering testing.

READ MORE: As monkeypox spreads in South Florida, experts have advice on prevention, risk, vaccines

Monkeypox myths: Fact vs. Fiction

Monkeypox has been around for six decades but never has been considered a sexually transmitted disease, according to Dr. John Esin, medical director for the department of emergency medicine at Jackson Memorial Hospital in Miami.

READ MORE: If monkeypox spread through sexual contact, is it an STD?

Are only gay men affected? While 99% percent of cases so far outside of the endemic area are in men, Esin previously told the Miami Herald, and all but 1% of cases are in men who have sex with men, the virus can impact anyone, including children, who have become the focus of monkeypox misinformation. And they can contract the virus by using basic items like towels or bed sheets that have had contact with positive patients.

Are there monkeypox myths? A Miami doctor breaks down disease fact and fiction

Tips to reduce your risk of getting monkeypox

IMG\_5970.jpgPatients who had appointments line up at Tropical Park's monkeypox vaccination site at noon on the first day Miami-Dade opened a Nomi vaccination site at the park to offer the Jynneos ***vaccine*** on Aug. 12, 2022.

The CDC offers the following tips on how to avoid catching monkeypox.

Avoid close, skin-to-skin contact with people who have a rash that looks like monkeypox.

Don't touch the rash or scabs of a person with monkeypox.

Don't kiss, hug, cuddle or have sex with someone with monkeypox.

Don't share eating utensils or cups with a person with monkeypox.

Don't handle or touch the bedding, towels or clothing of a person with monkeypox. If you have to handle these items in your field of work, such as people in the healthcare or hotel industry, minimize skin exposure by wearing gloves and try to avoid pressing bedding linens up against bare skin.

Wash your hands often with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer. (This advice applies to ***COVID***-19 prevention, too.)

If traveling to Central and West Africa, avoid contact with animals that can spread monkeypox virus, usually rodents and primates. Also, avoid sick or dead animals, as well as bedding or other materials they have touched, the CDC suggests.

Embed: Howard Cohen on monkeypox,meningococcal, dengue

monkeypox-sample.pngMicroscopic slide showing the monkeypox virus. Monkeypox cases in Florida, especially South Florida, have surged since late May, part of a worldwide epidemic of more than 6,000 cases.

Miami Herald staff writer Grethel Aguila contributed to this report.

**Load-Date:** September 9, 2022

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Feds will work to supply Florida doctors with COVID-19 vaccines for infants, toddlers*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65T8-HG61-DYJM-M03P-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

June 28, 2022 Tuesday

Copyright 2022 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** coronavirus

**Length:** 1162 words

**Byline:**  Daniel Chang

Miami Herald

**Body**

As Florida hospitals and doctors roll out the latest FDA-authorized vaccines for children as young as 6 months old, the Biden administration said it will work to supply pediatricians and family physicians in the state who cannot access small quantities of the shots due to Gov. Ron DeSantis' decision not to provide the vaccines for infants and toddlers through county health departments.

In Miami to visit Borinquen Health Care Center, a federally funded clinic, Admiral Rachel Levine, the assistant secretary for health at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, said Tuesday that as of last week Florida medical providers had ordered 20,000 doses of the new ***vaccine*** for children younger than 5.

"We are working hard to get these doses to the state as quickly as possible because Florida families should not suffer because of statements and actions that are politically motivated by the governor," Levine said.

READ MORE: ***COVID*** vaccines for infants arrive in Florida. Here's why doctors are throwing them away

Levine, who holds the rank of admiral in the U.S. Public Health Service, said the president is committed to making ***COVID***-19 vaccines for every eligible age group available to anyone who wants them.

"This is why we are committed to pulling every lever possible to get vaccines doses to Florida children as soon as possible," she said, "and we will continue to push the state to order doses for their local health departments."

MIA\_HHSADMIRALLEVINE\_KIDSUN(2) (3)Admiral Rachel Levine, assistant secretary for health at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, speaks during a drive to vaccinate children younger than 5 against ***COVID***-19 on Tuesday, June 28, 2022, at Borinquen Health Care Center in Miami. Miami-Dade Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** is to her right.

Florida's surgeon general has advised against vaccinating healthy young children, contrary to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's guidance for kids. The health department and governor's office did not respond to the Miami Herald's request for comment Tuesday.

READ MORE: How well do ***COVID*** vaccines for kids under 5 work? Where can you get one in Florida?

Doctor vaccinates her two young children

At Borinquen, Dr. Emy Jean-Marie, who works for the clinic, had her two young children vaccinated during the visit by Levine and Miami-Dade Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** as part of a campaign to spread the word among parents.

Jean-Marie said she vaccinated her two young children, Emiola, 3, and Deji, 9 months, because she has led by example during the pandemic -- getting vaccinated while she was pregnant to make the point that the shots are safe and effective.

MIA\_HHSADMIRALLEVINE\_KIDSUN (8)Dr. Nizar Dowla, right, gives a ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** to Deji Adebayo, 9 months old, while his mother, Dr. Emy Jean-Marie, and his sister, Emiola Adebayo, 3, watch. Jean-Marie is a doctor at Borinquen Health Care Center in Miami, where the assistant secretary for health at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Rachel Levine, and Miami-Dade Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** attended the ***vaccine*** drive on Tuesday, June 28, 2022.

"I am fine," Jean-Marie said, repeating what she tells hesitant patients and parents. "I don't have a tail. I don't have an extra arm. My baby is fine, and you know ... you're not going to be as ill if you were to contract the virus as individuals who are not vaccinated."

MIA\_HHSADMIRALLEVINE\_KIDSUN (5)Dr. Nizar Dowla, right, gives a ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** to Emiola Adebayo, 3, while she sits on the lap of her mother, Dr. Emy Jean-Marie, during a ***COVID vaccine*** drive for children younger than 5 on Tuesday, June 28, 2022, at Borinquen Health Care Center in Miami.

In South Florida, as elsewhere in the country, doctors and other medical providers have encountered low demand for the new vaccines. Among parents of children younger than 5, a nationwide survey released in May found that 1 in 5 wanted to get their child vaccinated "right away" once the shots were authorized.

More than a third said they would wait and see, while another 11 percent said they would vaccinate their children "only if required," according to the Kaiser Family Foundation survey.

Confusion over ***vaccine*** in Florida

Dr. Deborah Gracia, chief medical officer for Borinquen, said parents have been asking about the ***vaccine*** for newly eligible children, but many were not sure the shots would be available in Florida because of the state's actions.

"Because of the news, a lot of people don't know it's available," she said.

The governor's decision not to use state resources to provide the new vaccines means that neither patients or doctors can get them through county health departments. Pediatricians cannot procure small amounts through county health departments -- as they are able to do for every other age group eligible for a ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine***.

Children under 5 are the last group to be authorized for the ***COVID*** vaccines.

The minimum order for the new vaccines is 100, and they come packaged as 10 doses per vial. Once a vial is opened, a medical provider has a few hours to administer all doses before they expire.

Local pediatricians and family doctors who ordered the vaccines said they received them about two days later -- faster than expected given that Florida officials had missed a CDC deadline for pre-ordering the shots.

But some said they were forced to throw away shots due to the way they're packaged and the low demand.

Levine emphasized that, for the first time during the pandemic, almost every American can get vaccinated, which greatly reduces the risk of hospitalization and death from ***COVID***-19.

"These vaccines are safe, and these vaccines are effective," she said, "and they are strongly recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics and the American Academy of Family Physicians."

***COVID vaccine*** drive for young children

Levine Cava, the county mayor, emphasized during a press briefing that the vaccines will be available at no cost in Miami-Dade, including Wednesday during a pediatric ***vaccine*** drive that will offer the shots at eight different locations.

READ MORE: Where can babies and toddlers get ***COVID*** vaccines in Miami?

It's not clear how much longer vaccines and tests will be available for free, said Admiral Levine, who added that the Biden administration has urged Congress to renew funding for the nation's ***COVID***-19 response.

"Our funding in the future and our ability to continue these measures are at risk," she said.

But Levine also pledged to help parents access vaccines for the youngest children in states where health officials and elected leaders have recommended against it, contrary to the CDC's guidance.

"We want to get vaccines to all the local clinics, to all the pediatricians, to all the family physicians and as well as our federally qualified health centers," Levine said. "We're going to do that rapidly as we can and as hard as we can, but the challenge is that the actions of the governor and the surgeon general are making that more difficult."

**Load-Date:** June 28, 2022

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*DeSantis vetoes bill that would have punished local governments for regulating business*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65SD-MRW1-JC3J-X18T-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

June 24, 2022 Friday

Copyright 2022 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** state\_politics

**Length:** 850 words

**Byline:**  Mary Ellen Klas

Miami Herald

**Dateline:** TALLAHASSEE

**Body**

Gov. Ron DeSantis delivered a blow to some businesses by vetoing a bill Friday that would have required taxpayers to pay damages if a local government ordinance results in a business losing 15% of its revenues.

"The broad and ambiguous language of the bill will lead to both unintended and unforeseen consequences and costly litigation,'' DeSantis wrote in his veto message.

The measure, SB 620, would have allowed businesses that have been in operation for at least three years to file lawsuits seeking to recover lost profits for up to seven years if they lose revenues as a result of a local ordinance or citizen initiative.

It was one of a series of measures passed in the 2022 legislative session amid the standoffs between DeSantis and more progressive big city governments over ***mask*** mandates, ***COVID***-19 shutdowns and other pandemic-related policies.

In recent years, some business groups have turned to the Republican-controlled state Legislature to reverse or prevent local government decisions restricting natural gas hookups, regulating vacation rentals and party houses, banning plastic drinking straws and certain sunscreens, and imposing rules on where utility companies can set up solar farms.

Proponents called SB 620 a "pro-business" bill designed to protect private property rights. Opponents said it would be an expensive burden for taxpayers, encourage frivolous lawsuits, prevent efforts to crack down on such things as puppy mills, regulate bar hours, and to restrict bans on products that harm the environment.

Florida TaxWatch, the business-backed research organization, estimated that the legislation could cost local governments over $900 million annually because it predicted an avalanche of lawsuits could force governments to increase taxes or reduce services to cover legal fees.

But while DeSantis criticized local governments, he suggested the measure went too far.

"Local governments do overstep their authority and unreasonably burden businesses through policies that range from the merely misguided to the politically motivated,'' he wrote. "Indeed, this was illustrated by the bizarre and draconian measures adopted by some governments during ***COVID***-19, necessitating the state to overrule these edicts to protect freedom and opportunity for Floridians."

He added that, "incredibly this bill exempts compensating businesses due to 'emergency' orders of local government.'"

DeSantis suggested "the better approach is to enact targeted preemption legislation when local governments act in a way that frustrates state policy and/or undermines the rights of Floridians."

Last year, DeSantis signed into law a bill that preempted a decision by Key West residents who voted to ban cruise ships with more than 1,300 passengers from docking at the city ports.

Local officials sought the veto

Local government officials warned that the measure would pit businesses against each other and force taxpayers to foot the bill. They urged DeSantis to veto the legislation.

"Although the bill was amended to address some of the concerns with the original language, we fear that the creation of a private cause of action will lead to countless frivolous lawsuits whenever a local government passes a law perceived as unfavorable to a single entity,'' wrote Miami-Dade Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** in a March 28 letter to DeSantis. "We are also concerned that the volume of lawsuits will worsen the already litigious climate in Florida and negatively impact taxpayers."

The veto of SB 620 was the fourth time this year the governor derailed a priority project for Senate President Wilton Simpson, the Trilby businessman who is seeking the Republican nomination for agriculture commissioner.

Simpson used his clout to get the Senate to give fast-track approval to a top priority of Florida Power & Light, a measure that would undercut incentives to residential expansion of rooftop solar and allow utilities to impose new fees and costs. But that bill was vetoed by DeSantis who said it would "contribute to the financial crunch that our citizens are experiencing."

Simpson also attempted to inject into the budget $331 million in agriculture projects he could control if he were elected the next agriculture commissioner, including the addition of new staff. But DeSantis red-lined many of those as part of his $110 million in line-item vetoes in the budget.

And a Simpson-backed bill that would have given farmers priority access to water from Lake Okeechobee during a drought also was rejected by DeSantis, who warned that it created "unnecessary and redundant regulatory hurdles" that could compromise the execution of Everglades restoration projects.

Simpson did not respond to requests for comment.

The veto was lauded by advocacy groups who feared the measure would have had a chilling effect on environmental protection.

"This is a clear victory for local leaders and their constituents," said 1000 Friends of Florida President Paul Owens. Stopping SB 620 was one of the organization's top legislative priorities this year.

Mary Ellen Klas can be reached at [*meklas@miamiherald.com*](mailto:meklas@miamiherald.com) and @MaryEllenKlas

**Load-Date:** June 27, 2022

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Free COVID testing won't end at Miami-Dade sites after all, mayor says. Here's why*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65PM-FBC1-JC3J-X1NK-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

June 16, 2022 Thursday

Copyright 2022 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** coronavirus

**Length:** 701 words

**Byline:**  Michelle Marchante

Miami Herald

**Body**

Free ***COVID***-19 testing for people without insurance will not end at sites across Miami-Dade County in July after all, even though federal funding for the effort is drying up.

Miami-Dade County Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** announced Thursday at a news conference that she has secured an agreement with Utah-based Nomi Health to continue free testing and vaccination services at more than a dozen county sites.

Nomi Health is a private provider Miami-Dade hired to provide ***COVID***-19 testing and ***vaccine*** services in the county during the pandemic.

Anyone who lives in the U.S. and does not have health insurance can go to a Miami-Dade County site, sign a form, and get tested for free, Levine Cava said at the conference, which was held in front of the Nomi Health mobile test site at Stephen P. Clark Government Center in downtown Miami.

That includes the test site at Zoo Miami in South Miami-Dade, the Joseph Caleb Center in Miami and the popular site at Tropical Park, which is open around the clock.

For people without insurance, Nomi Health will now cover the cost of the test. For people with insurance, their insurer will continue to cover the cost. ***COVID***-19 vaccines will also continue to remain free for everyone.

MIA\_20220616\_MH\_COVIDTestinMiami-Dade County Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** speaks on behalf of the county and Nomi Health to give ***COVID***-19 testing updates at the Stephen P. Clark Center Nomi Testing Site in Miami on June 16, 2022.

The news comes just days after Levine Cava notified county commissioners in a memo Monday that ***COVID***-19 testing for people without insurance would start costing in July. In the memo, she said that without federal support for ***COVID***-19 services, the county would incur "unbudgeted expenditures" that would "adversely" affect the county's ability to provide services.

Previously, Nomi Health was funding its testing operations through the Federal Health Resources and Services Administration's Uninsured program. The program stopped accepting reimbursement claims for ***COVID***-19 testing and treatment services on March 22 and stopped accepting claims for ***vaccine*** administration on April 5.

The county then began relying on reimbursement funds from the Federal Emergency Management Agency to pay for tests and vaccines for the uninsured at county sites. The 100% federal reimbursement ends in July.

READ MORE: Where can people without insurance get a free ***COVID*** test in South Florida? Here's a list

"It is increasingly clear that here in Miami-Dade County, our residents still want and need access to these critical public health services," Levine Cava said, noting that county sites administer, on average, 225 ***vaccine*** doses and 11,000 tests a day.

After the news conference, when asked what made Nomi agree to take on the testing cost for the county, Levine Cava mentioned the "joint commitment" her administration and Nomi had to provide testing access to people, regardless of their ability to pay.

Nomi Health "crunched the numbers and they made an extraordinary commitment to cover the cost on their own out of what would otherwise be their profits," Levine Cava told the Miami Herald, noting that the provider was taking a "calculated risk" with the decision.

As for vaccines, all of the ***COVID*** shots available in the U.S. were purchased by the federal government and are administrated through providers that are enrolled in the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's ***COVID***-19 Vaccination Program. ***Vaccine*** providers enrolled in the program cannot charge people for the ***vaccine***.

In Miami-Dade County, ***COVID*** cases are rising and so are hospitalizations, though it hasn't reached the levels seen during the omicron-fueled winter surge. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention considers Miami-Dade, like the rest of South Florida, to be at high risk for ***COVID***-19 transmission and recommends people wear masks indoors in public places and on public transportation.

People can use Miami-Dade's online ***COVID*** test locator and Miami-Dade's online ***COVID vaccine*** locator to find a nearby site.

READ NEXT: Is it ***COVID*** or a cold? Can pills help? Time for a test? What to know about Florida surge

You think you have ***COVID***? What to know about your symptoms and how long to recover

**Load-Date:** June 17, 2022

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Where can people without insurance get a free COVID test in South Florida? Here's a list*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65PC-JCH1-DYJM-M3WJ-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

June 15, 2022 Wednesday

Copyright 2022 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** coronavirus

**Length:** 804 words

**Byline:**  Michelle Marchante

Miami Herald

**Body**

***COVID*** testing can be expensive -- about $100 or more -- for people who don't have insurance and are visiting someplace other than a free county site.

The good news is that free testing isn't going to end after all at sites across Miami-Dade County in July.

On Thursday, Miami-Dade County Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** announced that Nomi Health has agreed to cover the cost of the test for people without insurance. For people with insurance, your insurer will continue to cover testing and vaccines at Miami-Dade sites. Insurance information will be required at the sites.

Insurance companies and group health plans are also required to cover up to eight FDA authorized at-home ***COVID*** tests per person every month, either at the time of purchase or through reimbursement. Vaccines will continue to be free for everyone.

For people without insurance, there are other places besides county sites they can go to for free or low-cost testing in South Florida, too.

Here's where you can get a nose swab:

Free and low cost ***COVID***-19 testing in South Florida

Miami-Dade County has more than a dozen free testing and ***vaccine*** sites across the county. To find a ***COVID*** test and ***vaccine*** site near you, visit miamidade.gov/***covid***.

CVS Health said ***COVID***-19 testing, vaccinations and oral antiviral medications remain free for people without insurance at its pharmacies. CVS Health owns traditional CVS stores, CVS y mas and Navarro Discount Pharmacies. To schedule a ***COVID*** test, visit CVS.com

Walgreens said it is continuing to provide free ***COVID***-19 testing, vaccinations and oral antiviral medications for people without insurance as it awaits further guidance from the federal government. To schedule a ***COVID*** test, visit walgreens.com

Contact nearby health centers and ask about free or low-cost testing options. Health centers provide a variety of services to patients, regardless of insurance status. Patients pay for services based on income, known as a sliding fee scale, and no one is denied care based on ability to pay.

READ MORE: How to find a community health center near you

Jessie Trice Community Health System in Miami-Dade County, for example, is offering free or low-cost ***COVID***-19 testing to eligible patients. To learn more or to schedule an appointment, call 305-637-6404.

TIP: Florida Association of Community Health Centers has an online locator people can use to search for a health center in Florida by address, ZIP Code, center name or by county. You can then call to inquire about their test cost. The association told the Miami Herald some of the centers in Miami-Dade offering free ***COVID***-19 testing to eligible patients include Miami Beach Community Health Center and Borinquen Medical Centers.

Some centers might offer low-cost testing, such as the Center for Family and Child Enrichment in Miami Gardens, which offers rapid antigen testing for $10 and PCR testing for $25. Other centers such as FoundCare in Palm Springs may only be offering vaccines, not testing.

Free testing is available at health department-run sites in Broward County. As of Wednesday, four sites are offering free tests, though one is expected to close on June 29. Broward's health department says its testing and ***vaccine*** sites are locally funded and are expected to stay open until further notice. Broward's online ***COVID***-19 test locator has sites and hours of operation.

The federal government is giving out a third round of free at-home test kits. While the kits likely won't get to you in time if you're in need of one right now, it's good to have some in your home for the future. Request free test kits online at ***covid***.gov/tests.

While not necessarily low-cost, a variety of ***COVID***-19 at-home test kits are available for purchase online and through retail pharmacies, including CVS, Walmart and Walgreens. Test prices vary. If buying your test online, make sure to check if it's FDA authorized. The FDA's website has a list of authorized and counterfeit tests.

There are other places in South Florida that offer testing, including doctor offices, hospitals, urgent care centers and clinics. Test cost varies. Select Winn-Dixie pharmacies, for example, offer rapid ***COVID*** testing for $24.99 if you don't have insurance. You can use Florida's online test locator to filter sites by county and city. The locator provides info on what type of test is offered at the site and its contact info so you can inquire about test cost or to schedule an appointment, if needed.

And if you're wondering about Publix, the supermarket offers ***COVID*** vaccines, not tests.

READ MORE: Can I throw used ***COVID*** tests in the trash? What about hazardous waste?

Watch: How to use ***COVID***-19 at-home test kitsThe Centers for Disease Control and Prevention explains how people can use at-home test kits to check for ***COVID***-19.

This article will be updated.

**Load-Date:** June 17, 2022

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Free COVID testing ends at Miami-Dade sites as federal funds dry up. Here's what to expect*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65P2-YSF1-JC3J-X0FY-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

June 13, 2022 Monday

Copyright 2022 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** coronavirus

**Length:** 829 words

**Byline:**  Michelle Marchante

Miami Herald

**Body**

UPDATE: Miami-Dade County Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** on Thursday, June 16 announced that free testing won't end at county sites after all even though federal funds are drying up. She said Nomi Health has agreed to cover the cost of the test.

Read the original article below:

Starting in July, ***COVID***-19 tests will no longer be free for people without insurance at more than a dozen sites across Miami-Dade due to a lack of federal funding -- as South Florida continues to see a rise in cases.

Miami-Dade County Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** announced the move Monday afternoon to county commissioners. In a memo obtained by the Miami Herald, the mayor said that without federal support for ***COVID***-19 services, the county would incur "unbudgeted expenditures" that would "adversely" affect the county's ability to provide other essential government services.

The county had been relying on reimbursement funds from the Federal Emergency Management Agency to pay for tests and vaccines for the uninsured at county sites. The 100% federal reimbursement ends in July. For people with insurance, their insurer will continue to cover the cost of the tests and vaccines at the sites. Insurance info will be required at the sites.

Vaccines will also continue to be free for everyone at the ***vaccine*** sites.

Nomi is a Utah-based company that Miami-Dade hired to provide ***COVID***-19 testing and ***vaccine*** services in the county during the pandemic.

READ NEXT: You think you have ***COVID***? What to know about your symptoms and how long to recover

"Miami-Dade remains committed to doing everything possible to keep residents and visitors safe, and in preparation for this impending change to federal funding, my administration has worked in close collaboration with our partners at Nomi Health to establish a transition plan that will create continuity for the community that relies heavily on these critical services," Levine Cava said in the memo.

Previously, Nomi Health was funding its testing operations through the Federal Health Resources and Services Administration's Uninsured program. The program stopped accepting reimbursement claims for ***COVID***-19 testing and treatment services on March 22 and stopped accepting claims for ***vaccine*** administration on April 5. The bill for Nomi's services then fell on the county, who turned to FEMA's public assistance program for reimbursement. After July 1, FEMA will reduce its support for ***COVID*** eligible services.

Monday's memo doesn't say how much people without insurance can expect to pay for a test, but the county expects to have additional details in the coming days.

The change comes as Miami-Dade sees a jump in cases. The county's seven-day percent positivity was at 21%, as of Monday. At the height of the omicron surge in January, the positivity rates rose to 35%. Additionally, hospitalizations have ticked up though it hasn't reached the levels seen during the initial winter surge.

READ MORE: Here's where people without insurance can get a free ***COVID*** test in South Florida

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention considers Miami-Dade, like the rest of South Florida, to be at high risk for ***COVID***-19 transmission and recommends people wear masks indoors in public places and on public transportation.

As part of the change, Nomi Health will continue to cover operation costs at the testing and ***vaccine*** sites, including staff, supplies, facilities and equipment, according to the memo. Most sites are also expected to stay open seven days a week, with select sites continuing to operate around the clock, the mayor said.

"We are currently exploring all possible options to continue providing these vital services to those who are uninsured and unable to pay, including actively exploring having other partners to administer these services on-site and providing materials detailing where low- and no-cost testing and vaccines are available," Levine Cava wrote in the memo.

READ NEXT: 'We should definitely be concerned.' Miami-Dade's ***COVID***-19 cases, positivity rates soar

***COVID***-19 testing options in Miami-Dade

People can buy ***COVID***-19 at-home test kits online and through retail pharmacies including CVS and Walgreens.

At the moment, the U.S. government requires insurance companies and group health plans to cover up to eight at-home ***COVID*** tests per person every month, either at time of purchase or through reimbursement. The tests must be authorized by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

The federal government is also giving out a third round of free at-home test kits. While the kits likely won't get to you in time if you're in need of one right now, it's good to have some in your home for the future. You can request free test kits online at ***covid***.gov/tests.

Use Miami-Dade online ***COVID*** test locator and Miami-Dade online ***COVID vaccine*** locator to find a site near you. For people without insurance, tests will continue to be free until July.

READ MORE: Can I throw used ***COVID*** tests in the trash? What about hazardous waste?

**Load-Date:** June 17, 2022

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*'We should definitely be concerned.' Miami-Dade's COVID-19 cases, positivity rates soar*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65N9-24B1-JC3J-X2JG-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

June 10, 2022 Friday

Copyright 2022 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** coronavirus

**Length:** 1138 words

**Byline:**  Devoun Cetoute and Anuraag Bukkuri

Miami Herald

**Body**

With a new wave of omicron ***COVID*** cases surging in Miami-Dade County, the percent of local positive tests, known as the positivity rate, has soared, representing a fourfold increase since April and likely an undercount due to at-home testing.

On Monday, Miami-Dade County's seven-day average ***COVID***-19 positivity rate rose to 22 percent, up from a 5 percent rate on April 8, according to the county's ***COVID***-19 Daily Dashboard. The latest number is nearing the rates at the height of the omicron surge in January, when positivity rates scaled 35%.

"We should definitely be concerned now," said Mary Jo Trepka, an infectious disease epidemiologist and professor at Florida International University. "In fact, we should have been concerned several weeks ago."

Miami-Dade's mayor acknowledged the rising case counts and positivity rates, but said county residents are in a better position to weather the surge, the sixth wave since the coronavirus began in March 2020, as a result of their vaccinations.

"Miami-Dade is now in a new phase of the pandemic," the Office of Miami-Dade County Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** told the Miami Herald Thursday afternoon. "We have not beaten this virus, but we know how to control it. We are the most vaccinated county in Florida and our protective efforts are paying off."

As of Thursday, 86% of Miami-Dade's total population was fully vaccinated, about 2.3 million people. Florida's fully vaccinated rate is 67.5 percent; the U.S. rate is 66.7 percent. Fully vaccinated means people have received either the single dose J&J/Janssen ***vaccine*** or two doses of the Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna vaccines. It does not include a booster, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Trepka says there is a positive note to the county's high positivity rate: Hospitalizations haven't reached the levels during omicron's initial surge, which started in December, peaked in January and began waning in February. Immunity from the virus, whether from vaccination or previous infection, is keeping many out of the hospital.

"We have the staff, the beds and the resources to manage the current ***COVID***-19 patient volume," said Dr. Aileen Marty, professor of Infectious Diseases in the Department of Medicine at FIU Herbert Wertheim College of Medicine.

READ MORE: Is it ***COVID*** or a cold? Can pills help? What to know about Florida surge

Two new omicron variants fueling surge

The rise in cases is being fueled by omicron subvariants BA.4 and BA.5, which are creating a surge in new ***COVID***-19 cases across the country. On Tuesday, the CDC reported the two variants, first identified in South Africa in January and February, respectively, account for a combined 13 percent of U.S. cases for the week ended June 4.

In the first week of May, the two variants accounted for only about 1 percent of new ***COVID*** cases, the CDC said in its Tuesday update, which was the first time the CDC broke out the two variants in its weekly ***COVID***-19 variant report.

Public health experts have said these variants may be able to evade some immune protections, making them more contagious.

On Tuesday, the first three cases of the BA.4 variant were found in Florida in Miami-Dade County, according to a lab report.

READ MORE: There's a new, more contagious omicron strain, and it's in Miami-Dade. Here's what we know

Summer surge

In Florida, cases and positivity rates began to rise in the beginning of April. New cases slowly climbed, and by the end of the month, hospitalizations started to inch up -- although not nearly to the levels of the January surge. Deaths have remained relatively low, with about 100 to 300 people dying from ***COVID***-19 weekly in Florida since April.

By the first week of June, case counts topped the double digits. The state saw its seven-day average of new cases hit 10,927 on Thursday, nearly double from a month ago when the seven-day average was 5,424, according to Miami Herald calculations of CDC data.

While Miami-Dade County is not making new safety recommendations, such as requiring masks in county buildings -- mandates county leaders adopted during previous surges -- the county says it has a plan to combat the surge.

Levine Cava released her BEST Plan, which urges the community to get vaccinated and boosted, get tested if you have symptoms or have been exposed and stay home if you feel sick.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is recommending all South Florida residents, regardless of vaccination status, wear a ***mask*** indoors in public and on public transportation. That's because South Florida's four counties -- Miami-Dade, Broward, Palm Beach and Monroe -- have a high rate of community transmission, among the highest in the country.

Experts are echoing the same safety measures.

"We must ensure that our people are up to date on their ***COVID***-19 boosters and influenza vaccines," said Marty.

Trepka stressed the importance of testing and staying home if you feel ill.

Unvaccinated filling up hospitals

Unlike ***COVID***-19 surges of the past, hospitals haven't become overwhelmed.

The dominant circulating strains of omicron are highly infectious and can cause severe disease, Marty said. However, high rates of vaccination in the community mean the infections don't always lead to hospitalization, although the immunocompromised are at risk.

But for those who have not been vaccinated, it's another story.

Says Marty: "76% of hospitalized patients have never been vaccinated for ***COVID***-19, and virtually all vaccinated persons who end up in the hospital are elderly, immunocompromised, or have other serious debilitating conditions."

Dr. Hany Atallah, chief medical officer of Jackson Memorial Hospital, said Thursday the majority of Jackson patients with ***COVID*** have not been vaccinated.

"We're seeing also typically what we've seen in the past, which is the protectiveness of vaccines," Atallah said. "So the people who are in the hospital who are vaccinated tend to be less sick than those who are in the hospital who have never been vaccinated."

On Thursday, Jackson Memorial had 124 patients hospitalized with ***COVID***, with 26 of those patients in the ICU. On Jan. 12, during the peak of the omicron variant, Jackson had 564 patients who were hospitalized with ***COVID***-19.

Across Florida, 3,105 hospitalized patients are suspected or confirmed to have ***COVID***, with 297 in the ICU, according to Thursday's report from the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services. During the delta wave last summer and the omicron wave in January, the number of patients in Florida hospitals surpassed 15,000 a day.

Atallah said current trends show hospitalizations decreasing by the end of June.

As healthcare workers toil through a sixth wave of the virus, he says it has been challenging to juggle professional and personal safety.

"This has become obviously a marathon," he said. "And the marathon is not really over."

**Load-Date:** June 18, 2022

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Is it COVID or a cold? Can pills help? Time for a test? What to know about Florida surge*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65N1-3T31-DYJM-M382-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

June 8, 2022 Wednesday

Copyright 2022 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** coronavirus

**Length:** 1686 words

**Byline:**  Michelle Marchante

Miami Herald

**Body**

You cough or sneeze while waiting in line at the grocery store. The people around you shift away. Some might even give you a dirty look.

This is life in a ***COVID*** world as subvariants make their way across the country and as Florida sees a rise in cases again. And you don't necessarily have to look at the data to notice.

Just ask Art Murphy, the chief financial officer of CMC Group, the company owned by Miami luxury condo developer Ugo Colombo.

Murphy recently contracted ***COVID***-19 despite being vaccinated and twice-boostered. He thinks he was exposed to the virus after attending a graduation in Colorado.

"I'm dealing with three attorneys on one thing -- and all three have it," said Murphy, 57, of Coral Gables, who runs, swims and mountain bikes.

This was Murphy's first time testing positive. He said he had a mild head cold, no fever or sore throat. And he did not lose his sense of taste or smell, which often is one of the first signs of ***COVID***-19. But he quarantined at home.

"It's going around,'' he said.

Should you wear a ***mask*** again? And if you do get sick, how should you treat it? And how exactly does quarantine work?

Here's a guide to help you understand where we are and what to do:

Is Florida seeing a ***COVID*** surge again?

***COVID***-19 cases are going up again in Florida, with hospitalizations also ticking up, according to a Miami Herald analysis of data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Miami-Dade's seven-day percent positivity is at 22%, County Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** said on Wednesday. For now, it hasn't reached the levels seen in the winter, when omicron-fueled cases clogged ***COVID*** testing lines everywhere. In January, during the omicron surge, the county's seven-day percent positivity soared to 35% at one point.

Levine Cava tweet

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has all four South Florida counties -- Miami-Dade, Broward, Palm Beach and Monroe -- under the high risk for ***COVID*** transmission category, and is recommending people wear masks in indoor public spaces again.

Even with the surge in cases, infectious disease epidemiologist Mary Jo Trepka is hopeful that it won't be like omicron's winter surge. But the Florida International University professor also notes that the available data doesn't reflect the whole story.

"It doesn't really reflect reality. It's sort of like the tip of the iceberg," Trepka said. "We're not seeing everything else going on, we're not seeing the people who are only testing at home, we're not seeing the people that are just deciding not to get tested anymore because they're tired of the pandemic and we're not seeing people who might be infectious but have extremely mild symptoms."

READ NEXT: Traveling to Miami, Orlando or another Florida city? How to check the ***COVID*** risk level

How do I know if it's ***COVID***, flu, the common cold or allergies?

Sometimes people get a runny nose. A sore throat. Nasty diarrhea. And they feel really tired.

Is it ***COVID***? The flu? The common cold?

All three have similar symptoms -- although losing your sense of taste or smell is more common with ***COVID*** -- and makes it nearly impossible to tell unless you get tested.

What about ***COVID*** vs allergies?

While there are a few similarities, allergies won't give you fever. If you have itchy and watery eyes, you likely need a Zyrtec or other allergy medication.

If you start to get a cough or other ***COVID***-like symptoms, such as fever, your best bet is to get tested. If you're curious about the similarities and differences between ***COVID*** and the flu, common cold and allergies, the Mayo Clinic has a useful chart online.

How to wash your handsProper hand washing is one of the most important things we can do to prevent the spread of germs and illness. So, wash your hands people! Soap, water, 20 seconds is all it takes. These tips come from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Can I still get a ***COVID vaccine*** and booster? Is it effective against the new variants?

***COVID***-19 vaccines are still available at county-run sites and retail pharmacies across South Florida, including Publix, Walmart, Walgreens, Winn-Dixie, Fresco y Mas and Navarro.

As for the variants, it's like alphabet soup. We've had alpha, delta and omicron. There are also subvariants. These are all mutated versions of the original strain of SARS-CoV-2, which causes ***COVID***-19.

At the moment, the dominant strain in the U.S. is BA.2.12.1, an omicron subvariant. Two other contagious omicron subvariants, BA.4 and BA.5, are quickly gaining ground, as the Miami Herald has reported.

While the vaccines might not work as well against these variants, it will still offer some protection, Trepka said.

"And that's why if you're not vaccinated yet, you are going to definitely get a benefit from being vaccinated," Trepka said. "If you're not boosted yet, you'll get a benefit from being boosted."

I have symptoms or was exposed. Should I get a ***COVID*** test?

You should get tested if you start to feel ill or are exposed to someone with ***COVID***. The CDC recommends getting a test at least five days after having a known or suspected close contact to someone with ***COVID***.

If you're positive, speak with your doctor to see if you're eligible for a ***COVID*** pill. You should also quarantine and wear a ***mask*** if around others.

TIPS:

The federal government is giving out a third round of free at-home test kits. While the kits likely won't get to you in time if you're in need of one right now, it's good to have some in your home for the future. You can request free test kits online at ***covid***.gov/tests.

Miami-Dade County has an online ***COVID*** test locator you can use to find a site near you.

Watch: How to use ***COVID***-19 at-home test kitsThe Centers for Disease Control and Prevention explains how people can use at-home test kits to check for ***COVID***-19.

If I test positive for ***COVID***, do I have to tell my boss? What about my coworkers, family and friends?

If you test positive for ***COVID*** or are exposed to the virus, you may have to tell your boss, especially if you're working in-person. Your workplace likely has a policy in place to notify other people you were in close contact with that they were exposed.

Plus, you might not feel well enough to work.

While you don't have to tell your family or friends, you should if they were with you recently. They deserve to know so they can ***mask*** up, get tested and take other precautions.

What ***COVID*** medications are there?

If you fall ill with ***COVID***, you might be eligible to get Paxlovid or Molnupiravir, antiviral pills that are meant to help certain high-risk ***COVID*** patients combat the illness at home. The pills, which are under emergency-use authorization, require a doctor's prescription and can be fulfilled at select pharmacies including Publix, CVS, Walgreens and Walmart.

And unlike monoclonal antibody treatments, which require injections or IV infusion, Paxlovid and Molnupiravir are oral medications. You swallow them like Tylenol.

READ MORE: Where can you get a ***COVID*** pill in Miami and the rest of South Florida? Here's your list

The FDA says the pills should be taken by eligible patients as soon as possible once they test positive. Treatment should begin within five days of the beginning of symptoms. However, the pills are not an alternative to ***COVID***-19 vaccinations, the FDA says.

Check with your doctor to see if you're eligible for the pills. Make sure to mention allergies, illnesses and whether you're taking any medication, including vitamins or herbal products.

Visit the FDA's website or ask your healthcare provider to learn more about the medications.

What scientists are saying about the new ***COVID***-19 antiviral pills from Pfizer, MerckThe nonprofit, nonpartisan science news service SciLine asked scientists to share their insights into the new ***COVID***-19 antiviral pills from Merck and Pfizer. Here's what they had to say.

Do I have to quarantine if I test positive?

If you were exposed to ***COVID***, have no symptoms and are fully vaccinated, you don't need to quarantine, although you should wear a ***mask*** around others for 10 days, according to the CDC.

If you are not vaccinated, the CDC recommends quarantining for at least five days. After five days, if you have no symptoms, you can end your quarantine but should still wear a ***mask*** until Day 10.

If you test positive for ***COVID*** or have symptoms, the CDC recommends isolating for at least five days, whether or not you're vaccinated. If you live with others, isolate from them. This can sometimes be hard, especially in a multi-generational home, but do your best and lock yourself in a room.

If you have to be around others, wear a ***mask*** and ask them to wear one, too.

After five days, if you are fever-free for 24 hours (without fever-reducing medication) and your symptoms are improving, you can end isolation, per the CDC. And wear a ***mask*** until Day 10.

TIP: Not sure how long you should quarantine? The CDC has an online quarantine and isolation calculator you can use.

Should I wear a ***mask***? What other ***COVID*** precautions should I take?

Trepka, the FIU epidemiologist, says now is the time for people to be more cautious due to the region's rise in cases. She recommends people wear masks in indoor public spaces, especially in crowds. The CDC also recommends people wear masks on public transportation. People should consider their own underlying health, too.

Do you or a family member have a high risk condition? Are you immunocompromised? How old are you? Vaccinated or not vaccinated? Do you work with people who are considered high risk for severe illness?

These are all questions Trepka says people should be thinking about as they decide on whether to wear a ***mask*** or follow other precautions, at least, until the surge dies down again.

"It's like when you're riding on an airplane and the captain tell you that 'we're gonna have some turbulence, so put on your seatbelt,' " she said. "And then when things come down, the captain says 'you can take your seatbelt off now.' And I think that's what we're experiencing now, with ***COVID***."

READ NEXT: With ***COVID*** rising, what are you doing to stay healthy in South Florida? Take our poll

Miami Herald health editor Joan Chrissos contributed to this report.

**Load-Date:** June 10, 2022

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Biden wants to fix building codes across the nation. Florida is already ahead of the pack*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65KH-9G91-DYJM-M456-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

June 1, 2022 Wednesday

Copyright 2022 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** hurricane

**Length:** 859 words

**Byline:**  Alex Harris

Miami Herald

**Body**

Miami-Dade County has some of the strongest building codes in the world, designed to withstand the punishing 150 mph winds of Category 5 storms like Hurricane Andrew, which hit 30 years ago and inspired the change.

Now, President Joe Biden's administration wants the rest of the country to follow Miami-Dade's lead.

On Wednesday, the first day of the 2022 hurricane season, the administration announced a new initiative to modernize building codes around the country. Newer building codes could save energy and money and better prepare the nation for the more intense disasters brought on by climate change.

Every year, FEMA spends tens of billions of dollars rebuilding communities after hurricanes, wildfires and floods.

"Just think about how much less that would be and how much more resilient we would be if we had modern building codes," FEMA Administrator Deanne Criswell said at a press conference to announce the initiative.

READ MORE: Your 2022 hurricane survival guide for South Florida

She stood in front of a towering structure of massive fans at Florida International University's "Wall of Wind" research facility, the warehouse where researchers test drive new roof and building technologies against gale-force winds.

MIA\_02FEMAANNOUNCENTFEMA Administrator Deanne Criswell, center, announces a new federal initiative to modernize building codes across the nation to prepare for disasters and climate change. She spoke at Florida International University's Wall of Wind on Wednesday, June 1, 2022.

READ MORE: FIU to build facility to simulate 200 mph hurricanes, 10-20 foot storm surge

Building federal buildings with stronger building codes

Criswell said the Biden administration hopes to export some of those findings -- on the newest and best building technology -- to create a stronger building code to use on any building built with federal money, as well as to help communities adopt more modern building codes.

'We're going to make sure that when we spend taxpayer dollars that we build to these modern codes," said Deputy White House National Climate Advisor Ali Zaidi.

Zaidi said the administration has earmarked $225 million for grants to help small communities staff up and adopt new codes, as well as give incentives to communities to switch to newer codes.

Michael Savage, director of the International Code Council, said the fact that Florida publishes a new version of its statewide building code every three years is unusual. And so is that most Florida counties and cities immediately adopt the updated code.

READ MORE: Tropical depression could form soon, and there's another system, forecasters say

Using outdated building codes across the country

A FEMA study found that two-thirds of the nation relies on outdated building codes. And not just one edition behind.

Savage said he knows of some communities in Virginia that still use electrical codes from 1996.

"That's a little problematic. A national initiative goes a long way toward fixing that," he said.

Miami-Dade County Mayor on how to be prepared this hurricane seasonMiami-Dade County Mayor, ***Daniella Levine Cava***, spoke about the key steps for residents to take ahead of the 2022 hurricane season: stay informed, be storm ready, make a plan and get your ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine***.

For the rest of the nation, that might look like following in Florida's footsteps. But that doesn't mean Miami-Dade can stop making improvements, said Roy Wright, president of the Insurance Institute for Business & Home Safety.

"There's no question about it that Miami-Dade is the lead goose," he said. "What's so imperative is that Miami-Dade stay up front and keep taking the best and latest science."

Wright pointed to the Surfside condominium collapse last June, which he called a "horrifying reminder" that we need better research and technology to fix aging buildings.

As for storms, he said the next frontier for research is how to design a building that can withstand the pummeling winds and storm surge of a hurricane like Harvey, which flooded Houston for days, or Dorian, one of the deadliest storms to strike the Bahamas.

"Yes, you've addressed fundamental pieces and the rest of the country is following you, but let's not fall prey to a failure of imagination," Wright said.

Florida's building code doesn't take sea rise into account. That could change.

Failing to protect against rising seas in Florida

Another growing threat is increased flooding from sea level rise, which South Florida already regularly experiences. Some local climate advocates have called for Miami-Dade to once again lead the nation and develop a new suite of building codes to protect against flood.

But so far, the state's building code team has not adopted any of the sea rise-related flooding standards researchers suggested.

Wright said he didn't necessarily see a need for a new set of flood codes. Instead, he suggested that communities should follow the established science for living with water.

"Unlike wind, there's only three ways to mitigate for flood. You can get out of the way, you can go higher and stronger and you can redirect the water," he said. "I don't know that we've gotten enough out of the way."

**Load-Date:** June 15, 2022

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Is it safe to stay in your Miami high-rise during a tropical storm or hurricane? What to know*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65KC-9KC1-JC3J-X3G5-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

June 1, 2022 Wednesday

Copyright 2022 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** hurricane

**Length:** 1325 words

**Byline:**  Michelle Marchante

Miami Herald

**Body**

If you live in a Miami high-rise, it's time to prepare.

Hurricane season is here, and you have some things to think about:

Do you have enough food and water? Does your complex have a generator in case the power goes out? And most important, can you wait out the storm in your condo tower -- or will you have to leave?

Whether you're a longtime resident or a newbie to the state, here's what to know about surviving a hurricane in a high-rise:

Is it safe to be in a high-rise during a tropical storm? What about a hurricane?

Generally, it's safe to stay in your building during a storm. Florida has some of the strictest building codes in the country. The building code is stricter in Miami-Dade and Broward counties, in the state's "high velocity hurricane zone."

Thousands of people in Miami Beach, Coconut Grove, Brickell and Sunny Isles Beach, for example, live in modern condo and apartment towers that can withstand winds up to 175 mph. But not every building is the same, and resilience to hurricane-force winds can depend on what code was in effect at the time of construction.

And while some older buildings may have been renovated to meet stricter standards, others may be more vulnerable to a storm. The good news is that most of Miami's residential high-rises meet the stricter codes that would protect people during a storm.

"Miami-Dade building code requires the first 30 feet of any high-rise to be equipped with high-impact windows, which can withstand being hit by a nine-pound 2x4 traveling at 50 feet per second. ... Above 30 feet, windows are required to use 'mall missile impact' glass, which can withstand being struck by a small steel ball bearing traveling at 130 feet per second," a 2019 Miami Herald article explains.

As we enter the 2022 hurricane season, Florida Division of Emergency Management Director Kevin Guthrie recommends people check if their homeowners' association has kept up with the building's maintenance, when the building's structural integrity was last inspected, and if the building is hurricane-rated. The division handles the state's response to disasters. It also managed the state-run ***COVID***-19 test and ***vaccine*** sites that were open during the pandemic.

If your building is old, you'll also want to check its recertification status.

However, even if everything is up-to-date, Guthrie says you might not want to wait out a storm in a high-rise if you live in South Florida's coastal areas, such as downtown Miami, Surfside and Miami Beach.

Strong, gusty winds aren't the only hazard hurricanes bring. There's also storm surge. And if your neighborhood or your building's parking lot or garage floods, you might not be able to leave your home for a few days after the storm. Flooding in the neighborhood could also cut you off from police and paramedics.

READ NEXT: Your 2022 survival guide to tropical storms, hurricanes in Miami, Broward and the Keys

How can I check if I'm in an evacuation zone?

Cars drive through a flooded street at Northeast 11th Street and Biscayne Boulevard in Miami during heavy rains and king tides on Nov. 5, 2021.

Miami-Dade County Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** can issue an evacuation order for people who live in certain areas of the county ahead of a storm, based on its projected track and storm surge risk. Most of Miami-Dade's coastal areas, including Brickell, downtown Miami and Miami Beach, are in evacuation zones.

These areas tend to flood during thunderstorms and king tides so flooding is also likely during hurricanes.

While county officials can't force you to leave your home, you should do so if an evacuation order is issued. And don't forget about your pets. If it's too dangerous for you to ride out a storm in your apartment, it's dangerous for them, too.

"If there's ever a doubt in your mind as whether or not to evacuate or not, then go ahead and evacuate," said Guthrie. "That's a good rule of thumb. Based on the situation you're facing at hand, if there's a doubt -- 'Should I stay or should I go?' -- always go."

To check if your Miami-Dade neighborhood is in an evacuation zone, visit miamidade.gov/hurricane. You can also find your zone at FloridaDisaster.org/Know. Evacuation zones are designated from A to F, and generally, Zone A is most likely to be evacuated first.

Monitor local media, including the Miami Herald, for updates on evacuation orders.

TIP: If an evacuation order is issued for your neighborhood, you'll find information on evacuation centers and bus pickup locations on the county's website. If you don't want to visit a storm shelter, go to the home of a family member or friend.

Hurricane category isn't the full picture. Scientists suggest it's time for a new scale

Will my condo lose power?

The cooling tower, which is what keeps the AC running in the building, is usually shut off for safety during a hurricane. And whatever you do, don't open your window or balcony during the storm, even if it's sweltering inside your place.

"The very first rule is to close every single opening and make sure the wind cannot get in, because the amount of air that comes in is so great, and the pressure is so high, it would start demolishing the walls," Alan Ojeda, CEO of the real estate developer Rilea Group, told the Miami Herald in 2019.

Guthrie says you should also consider your living situation, whether you live in a condo tower or a home: If you or a family member is power-dependent, say for oxygen, you shouldn't spend the storm in a place that could be without power for hours, days or weeks.

Also, if you live on a higher floor, think about what you'll do once the storm has passed, the power is out and the elevators aren't working. Will you A: Stay in your condo ***COVID***-lockdown style? Or B. Walk up and down four, five or more flights of stairs (with no AC) to get around?

If a storm is coming, where do I leave my car?

If a tropical storm or hurricane is coming, you'll want to park your car in a covered garage on a floor where it will be safe from flood damage and wind shear. But keep in mind that you might not be able to get to your car immediately once the storm is over. The streets might be flooded.

If your parking space is in an open area, move your car away from trees and power lines, and park it next to buildings (but away from windows) to provide some protection from the wind.

TIP: Cities like Miami usually open municipal garages ahead of a storm to give residents a place to park at least one of their cars. Check with your city to see what's offered and what the requirements are. Miami, for example, requires city residents and employees to enroll for hurricane parking to be eligible.

What if I'm in my condo during the storm and start to feel unsafe?

Here's the thing about storm preparation: You need to have everything ready before the storm is at your door. That means if you decide to stay in your high-rise condo, you can't change your mind in the middle of the bad weather.

Regardless of whether you're in a high-rise or a house, if you no longer feel safe inside your home, you can't just run out the door.

"As soon as you step out into those hurricane-force winds, they're probably going to sweep you away and knock you down the street," said Guthrie, the state emergency director.

Instead, stay away from windows and figure out the safest place in your apartment or condo tower.

In high-rises, the safest, strongest section of the building is generally the stairwell. But once the storm is over, rescuers might not be able to reach you because of flooding or other hazards.

READ MORE: Who are you going to call if a storm comes to Florida? Here's an emergency contact list

Some information in this article comes from a 2019 Herald article written by former staff writer Rene Rodriguez.

How (un)prepared are you for a hurricane?Do you know how to protect yourself -- and your home -- in the event of a hurricane? Here are some easy steps to take before the season kicks off -- and what actions to take if a hurricane forms.

**Load-Date:** June 1, 2022

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*With COVID surging, South Florida braces for 'the busiest Memorial Day weekend ever'*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65HW-H4S1-DYJM-M0HY-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

May 25, 2022 Wednesday

Copyright 2022 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** coronavirus

**Length:** 2061 words

**Byline:**  Daniel Chang

Miami Herald

**Body**

Record numbers of visitors are expected in South Florida for Memorial Day weekend at the same time that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is warning about rising ***COVID***-19 cases and hospital admissions in the region -- casting a pandemic cloud over what is typically a raucous start to the summer season.

With concerts, an air and sea show, and countless parties planned throughout Miami and Fort Lauderdale this holiday weekend, public health experts say that few people are likely to hear or to heed the CDC's recommendation to wear a well-fitting face ***mask*** indoors in public, regardless of vaccination status.

The CDC's warnings come at a moment in the more than two-year-old pandemic when many Americans appear to be ignoring the signs of a resurgent virus in Florida and elsewhere.

"We all want to return back to normal and are frustrated," said Jason Salemi, an epidemiologist with the University of South Florida.

With so many people having contracted the virus in recent months, Salemi said it might seem like everyone knows someone who has ***COVID***-19 or just got over a case -- and very few people see their friends and relatives getting severely ill or hospitalized because there is so much immunity already built up from vaccines and prior infections, further eroding the CDC's calls for caution.

"We've paid a very stiff price in the past couple of waves to build up some immunity," he said. "The reason we're seeing the increase in hospitalizations is less pronounced than the increase in cases is because that immunity is blunting the effects of community transmission."

But many of the same principles that applied early during the pandemic are still in play, particularly the need for the healthy many to protect the vulnerable few, said Dr. Carla McWilliams, chief of infectious diseases for Cleveland Clinic Florida in Weston.

"If you think about it more on a population-based level and what risk you might be causing other people, then the right thing to do is to wear a ***mask*** to get community transmission back down," McWilliams said.

McWilliams acknowledged, however, that getting through to people about the importance of protecting the vulnerable won't be easy.

"I don't think you can wrap it into a simple message," she said.

South Florida leading Florida's jump in ***COVID*** cases

What is clear from state and federal health data is that Miami-Dade and Broward are leading a ***COVID***-19 resurgence in Florida, with the number of new cases and hospital admissions rising steadily for weeks, according to Miami Herald calculations of CDC and Florida data.

In the seven days ended May 19, Florida's health department reported 60,204 new cases. About 40% of the total were in South Florida, including 15,968 in Miami-Dade and 7,828 in Broward.

READ MORE: Florida's ***COVID*** cases rise in last week

***COVID*** hospital admissions also have continued to rise, with 2,157 inpatients reported in Florida or about 4% of all beds in use as of Tuesday, according to hospital usage data from the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services.

A muddled message

The CDC's weekly assessment for each county, known as the ***COVID***-19 Community Level, measures the number of new cases and hospital admissions and capacity to determine whether a community's risk is low, medium or high. Guidance for individuals and state and local governments changes depending on the ***COVID***-19 community level, with a "high" mark recommending indoor masking for everyone.

The CDC raised the level for Florida's most populous counties, Miami-Dade, Broward and Palm Beach, to its highest warning level on May 19 after the number of new ***COVID***-19 cases and hospital admissions in the previous seven days had exceeded the agency's thresholds.

MIA\_***COVID***\_LEVELS\_DAV6A motorist sits in his vehicle as he waits for a healthcare professional to swab his nose for a ***COVID***-19 PCR Nasal Swab test at a Nomi Health testing center inside Tropical Park in Miami, Florida, on Tuesday, May 24, 2022.

But the agency's message was muddled by a data processing error that shows Miami-Dade and Broward with a "medium" level of risk, during which the CDC recommends that people with weakened immune systems and other high-risk medical conditions talk to their healthcare provider about the need to wear a ***mask*** and take other precautions.

The CDC advises that people can wear masks at any risk level and based on personal preference. People with symptoms, a positive test or exposure to someone with ***COVID***-19 are also advised to wear a ***mask***.

The agency reported the error in a footnote that Salemi noticed during his regular review of the CDC's ***COVID***-19 data for Florida.

salemi tweet

Jasmine Reed, a CDC public affairs specialist, said the federal agency depends on voluntary reporting by states and local governments for data on ***COVID***-19 conditions, which determine the community level for each county. The CDC updates community levels each Thursday, but Reed did not provide an explanation for the error.

Jeremy Redfern, press secretary for the Florida Department of Health, said in an email that there was "an upload error" while providing data to the CDC on May 13, and that the state followed up with the CDC on May 17 to provide the data again.

"The continuing problem is a data processing error on the CDC side," he said.

No ***mask*** mandates

Regardless of the error, the CDC's guidance for South Florida remains just that, a recommendation without the force of a mandate or law.

Miami-Dade's and Broward's mayors said they have no plans to issue an indoor ***mask*** mandate or any other requirements to help reduce the spread of ***COVID***-19 in their communities. Leaders in both counties have adopted response plans that put the onus on individuals to take personal steps to protect themselves from the virus.

"I don't support ***mask*** wearing indoors anymore," said Broward Mayor Michael Udine. "I think we're through that part of the pandemic. We're going to have to learn to live with this in a careful way, and people are going to have to do what they need to do to protect themselves."

Broward's top administrators issued a memo in April citing CDC guidance and "strongly encouraging" face masks and social distancing on county property. But Udine said that with vaccines, ***COVID***-19 therapeutics and an evolving scientific understanding of SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes ***COVID***-19, the pandemic is now more manageable and people are devoting less energy to it.

"We've learned how to deal with this," he said. "People have taken the precautions they need to take. I feel we're in a place now where we need to move forward as a society and be careful when someone needs to be careful. But I think we need to live life and we need to understand that ***COVID*** is here to stay."

Miami-Dade Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** declined the Herald's interview request but a spokeswoman said she is not considering changes to the county's ***COVID***-19 mitigation policy, called "Our BEST Plan" and focused on encouraging residents to get booster shots, stay home if they're sick and get tested if they have symptoms such as fever, cough, shortness of breath or new loss of taste or smell.

levine cava tweet

"The administration's main priority is to keep encouraging residents to get vaccinated and boosted," said Natalia Jaramillo, deputy communications director for the mayor's office.

Levine Cava, who received her second booster shot at a public event on May 20, acknowledged on the social media website Twitter that the county's ***COVID***-19 indicators were high but that serious illness and hospitalizations were low compared to previous surges.

Protecting yourself

With so many events taking place, public health experts say the risk of ***COVID***-19 will vary by an individual's immunity and medical condition and the setting.

Though the risk of catching or spreading ***COVID***-19 outdoors is substantially lower than it would be indoors, Salemi said the warm weather is likely to cause many people to go indoors and cool off inside a bar, restaurant or nightclub where few are likely to be wearing a ***mask***.

In those cases, Salemi said, people should seek places with good ventilation and circulation of air, such as open doors and windows, ceiling fans or air purifiers.

"If you're in a densely crowded area with poor ventilation, that's obviously a place where the virus is more easily going to pass from person to person," he said. "The more ventilation you have, the more filtration of the air, the more you do things outdoors, those are all things that reduce your risk of getting infected with the virus or passing it to other people."

Indoor nightclubs, bars and restaurants where crowds of people are eating and drinking, and singing and talking loudly, are the kinds of settings where ***COVID***-19 is more likely to spread. And though many young and healthy people may not be at risk of severe illness, hospitalization or death, Salemi emphasized that wearing a ***mask*** indoors in public places and taking other measures to reduce the spread of viruses is as much about helping others as it is about protecting oneself.

Protecting others

He pointed to the experiences of past pandemic waves, particularly the delta surge during summer 2021 and the winter spike fueled by the omicron variant and its subvariants, when the number of new cases exploded and disrupted hospitals, police and fire departments, schools and other public institutions.

When community spread goes unmitigated in that way, Salemi said, the virus will find those who are most vulnerable -- from the elderly in long-term care facilities to children who are too young to be vaccinated, to those with weakened immune systems and underlying chronic medical conditions.

Many of those individuals cannot just protect themselves in the same way that most healthy people do, he said.

"There's just still a lot of very vulnerable people in our community and it has not worked when we say let's just protect the vulnerable," Salemi said. "The delta surge really showed us that. When community spread went out of control, it found the vulnerable people and we ended up with 400 people dying every day during the worst of that surge."

He urged Floridians and others to take "small steps" that collectively can help reduce community spread of the virus.

"I know I can take small but simple steps, still really be able to interact with the world around me in the same regard, and if that can help reduce spread and protect people around me, then that just seems like a win-win," he said.

McWilliams of Cleveland Clinic Florida said visitors and residents alike should keep an eye on community spread as indicated by the CDC's data tools, including the ***COVID***-19 community level.

"You have to assess your own underlying risk and the risk to those who are around you," she said.

What he's seeing at a test site

As South Florida prepares for an influx of visitors and a celebration of events to honor those who lost their lives while serving in the U.S. Armed Forces, a worker at a ***COVID***-19 testing kiosk in North Miami provided a window into the public's attitude toward the resurgent pandemic on Tuesday morning.

"There's definitely a lot less people coming to get tested," said Zackary Maldonado, 21, who administers ***COVID***-19 tests at a Blue Med Consultants kiosk on Northeast 116th Street and Biscayne Boulevard. "I think people have stopped caring, to be honest."

MIA\_01COVIDLEVELS\_NORTHBlue Med Consultants employee Zackary Maldonado, 21, has seen a serious drop in the numbers of people seeking ***COVID***-19 tests this year compared to last fall, but he said numbers have slowly been rising a bit at the testing site near the intersection of Biscayne Boulevard and Northeast 116th Street in North Miami, Florida.

During the months leading up to December, Maldonado said, the kiosk saw about 100 people a day. That volume dropped to about 20 people per day in January but recently ticked up to about 40 daily customers, he said.

Most customers visiting the kiosk are getting tested at the kiosk in advance of traveling or because they need to show a negative result to return to work, he said.

With new cases and hospital admissions rising in South Florida, Maldonado said he advises clients to heed the CDC's guidance, though he's not always sure that they take his advice.

"People definitely should be wearing their masks, especially if cases are rising again," he said. "But at the end of the day people are going to do what they want."

**Load-Date:** May 26, 2022

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Should we be worried about monkeypox in South Florida? Here's what you need to know*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65HT-J281-JC3J-X4JN-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

May 24, 2022 Tuesday

Copyright 2022 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** health\_care

**Length:** 1906 words

**Byline:**  Howard Cohen

Miami Herald

**Body**

Monkeypox is on your mind. How can it not be?

For more than two years, we've lived with contagious ***COVID***-19 and still have to take precautions as new variants arise.

Now, the world health community is talking about something else that is contagious, monkeypox, and it has caught the attention of the Biden administration and local health officials -- including Miami-Dade Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** and the Florida Health Department in Broward.

That's because there are two confirmed cases in Florida, according to Broward's health department. One person's illness is related to travel, the second person did not travel and caught it in the United States, said Dr. Aileen Marty, a Florida International University distinguished professor in infectious diseases and director of the FIU Health Travel Medicine Program and ***Vaccine*** Clinic commander.

President Joe Biden: Monkeypox is something to 'be concerned about'U.S. President Joe Biden said on May 22, 2022, that recent cases of monkeypox that have been identified in Europe and the United States were something "to be concerned about." These were his first public comments on the disease.

Miami-Dade Mayor Levine Cava monkeypox

You have questions. So the Miami Herald spoke with Dr. Marty to answer some of the most pressing things you need to know -- including how to avoid catching the virus.

What is the monkeypox virus?

monkeypox-sample.pngMonkeypox virus under a microscope.

Monkeypox is a rare disease that was first discovered in 1958 when two outbreaks of a pox-like disease occurred in colonies of monkeys kept for research, hence the name, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The first human case of monkeypox was recorded in 1970 in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Since then, monkeypox has been reported in humans in other central and western African countries.

On May 18, a U.S. resident tested positive for monkeypox after returning to Massachusetts from Canada. Then two more cases were reported in South Florida. Europe has also seen some activity in May.

FIU's Dr. Marty adds detail: "The monkeypox virus is a true pox virus (orthopox), just like the variola virus that caused smallpox. Orthopox viruses are DNA viruses -- very different from flu or SARS-CoV-2, which are RNA viruses. Nearly all documented human cases -- since it was first described to cause human disease in 1970 -- have been transmitted from an animal to a human. Animal-to-human transmission is usually via a bite or scratch, preparation of wild game, and direct or indirect contact with body fluids or lesion material."

How is monkeypox spread from one person to another?

"Uncommonly, human-to-human spread can happen, and when it does, the monkeypox virus spreads via bodily fluids, including respiratory droplets and genital secretions," said Marty.

"Historically, human-to-human spread has happened among family members or individuals in congregate settings -- [such as] prisons. But this time it is happening mainly from a different close encounter, the sexual encounter," she noted.

"Currently, the CDC is distinguishing persons with direct contact -- exposure to the skin, crusts, bodily fluids, or other materials -- as high risk and those with indirect contact -- presence within a six-foot radius in the absence of an N95 or filtering respirator for three or more hours -- with a patient with monkeypox as lower risk. But health departments should monitor even those people."

Dr. Aileen-Marty jpg.jpgDr. Aileen Marty, an infectious disease expert from Florida International University. Among her roles: she's a distinguished university professor in infectious diseases with FIU's College of Arts, Sciences and Education and the department of Translational Medicine at the Herbert Wertheim College of Medicine. She's laboratory director and clinical consultant for the FIU-Health Auxiliary, High Complexity CLIA laboratory for ***COVID***-19. Also, director of the FIU Health Travel Medicine Program and ***Vaccine*** Clinic commander.

What are monkeypox symptoms?

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, symptoms of monkeypox include fever, headache, muscle aches, backache, chills, exhaustion and swollen lymph nodes followed by a rash.

The distinctive clinical features of monkeypox happen after the first symptoms, Marty adds. After an incubation period of five to 21 days, but usually six to 12 days, infected people get early symptoms like a bad headache, fever, back pain, muscle ache and swollen lymph nodes.

These early symptoms generally last one to three days and then comes the rash.

"The rash is unusual because it classically starts on the face and the palms of the hands and the soles of the feet, followed by rash elsewhere -- but in the current outbreak, that has not been the usual spread. In this outbreak, lesions have manifested first in the groin, and the prodrome [early symptom] has not been as severe or notable," Marty said.

"Curiously, experimental infections in monkeys also show genital lesions," Marty said. "Genital lesions could easily be mistaken for a different infection by someone unfamiliar with monkeypox manifestations."

READ MORE: First US monkeypox case reported this year, health officials say. What to know

Monkeypox image WHO.pngMonkeypox lesions on the skin in this World Health Organization image.

When are people infectious?

People are infectious from a few hours before the first symptom manifests until the scabs are dry and gone.

According to the CDC, lesions progress through the following stages before falling off: macules (flat lesions), papules (well-definined skin bump), vesicles (blister, filled with clear fluid, usually), pustules (bulging fluid containing pus) and scabs.

The illness typically lasts for two to four weeks. "In Africa, monkeypox has been shown to cause death in as many as one in 10 persons who contract the disease," the CDC said.

The rash is typically painful, Marty adds, and the scabs contain infectious viral particles.

Is the Miami area more likely for a spread of monkeypox because of international travel?

Travel isn't the only way one can catch monkeypox.

"We have a high incidence of sexually transmitted infections in Miami-Dade and sexual transmission is currently the dominant transmission in this outbreak. Thus, the combination of behavior and international travel poses an increased risk for our community," Marty said.

WHO asks for 'strengthened coordination' as monkeypox outbreak reaches the USThe president of the 75th annual World Health Assembly said an outbreak of monkeypox served as a reminder of how vulnerable and interconnected the world is and stressed the need for a "strengthened coordination mechanism between members."

Is this outbreak of monkeypox a challenge to public health?

A healthcare adviser with the World Health Organization recently told the Associated Press the current and "unprecedented" outbreak of monkeypox in developed countries appears to have been caused by sexual activity at two recent raves in Europe, in Spain and Belgium.

"But anyone can be infected through close contact with a sick person, their clothing or bed sheets," the AP reported.

"This new outbreak that is primarily spreading in the gay, bisexual and men-who-have-sex-with-men community produces new logistic and public health challenges," said Marty. "The long incubation period is also part of the challenge because people can be infected for almost three weeks before showing any disease."

Treatment for monkeypox?

"There is no specific antiviral treatment for monkeypox, but the virus has many similarities to the variola virus of smallpox, so the antivirals developed for smallpox will help people with monkeypox," Marty said.

If you suspect you may have monkeypox or been exposed to it or it's been confirmed you need to seek immediate medical attention. This can not only help you but it can help others.

"Monkeypox is a reemerging infection with an unusually high spread, unpleasant at best and deadly at worst -- though death is very unlikely and has not yet been seen in this outbreak," Marty said. Monkeypox can produce scarring and serious consequences if the scarring involves a vital organ, like the eyes.

There is a newly approved antiviral, tecovirimat (ST-246), but it is not widely available, according to Marty. If a person is not yet symptomatic, there are vaccines that could prevent severe symptoms. The CDC is asking physicians to use cidofovir or vaccinia immune globulin to control monkeypox.

"Similarly, the new Jynneos ***vaccine*** is not widely available, nor is the old ACAM2000, but working with the Florida Department of Health, physicians may be able to obtain these newer solutions," Marty said.

Will my decades-old smallpox shot help?

0301221281.JPGIn January 2003, two registered nurses at Jackson Memorial Hospital's children's hospital center attend a seminar for employees of the University of Miami and Jackson Memorial Medical Center who might have needed to get the smallpox ***vaccine***. The nurse at right was checking to see which of her arms had her previous smallpox scar. At the time, post-9/11, healthcare and public health workers were being vaccinated so that they could protect others in the event of a smallpox outbreak given some concerns that there could be a bioterrorist attack using smallpox as a weapon, the New York Health Department said.

Those of us of a certain age may recall getting the smallpox vaccination. That's the one that left a dime-sized scar on our upper left arms, according to WebMD. But routine vaccination against smallpox, which was largely wiped out by the worldwide vaccination program that began in 1958, largely ended in the United States in 1972.

Post-9/11, there was some movement in the early 2000s to revive the smallpox vaccination program for healthcare workers should there be a bioterrorist attack using smallpox as a weapon, the New York Health Department noted.

Will that scar pay off with immunity for the 50 and over set?

Somewhat, Marty believes. Accent on the somewhat. "Persons who got a smallpox ***vaccine*** over 50 years ago have minimal T-cell memory from that ***vaccine*** but virtually no neutralizing antibodies," she said.

What can you do to protect yourself now?

We know what to do to protect ourselves against ***COVID***-19 -- take the vaccines and boosters, wear a ***mask***, practice social distancing. We've heard the drill even though some refuse to heed health experts' advice.

But what about monkeypox?

"From an individual perspective, situational awareness and standard public health measures will reduce the risk, including hygiene and asking questions before engaging in sexual relationships, Marty said. "Because transmission via respiratory droplets is a risk, masking is critical for healthcare workers, and in particular for healthcare workers and other employees at sexually transmitted infections clinics.

Who is at the most risk?

Currently, the most likely to get infected are sexually active individuals, particularly those in the gay, bisexual or men-who-have-sex-with-men community and healthcare workers who encounter infected persons, according to Marty.

"But the risk of severe disease is highest for children, pregnant women and those with severe underlying conditions."

00000000000-DESKTOP-LH24Q8L-DESKTOP-LH24Q8L-2.jpgFlorida International University infectious disease expert Dr. Aileen Marty is also a professor and voting member on the board for the International Federation for Tropical Medicine.

**Load-Date:** May 25, 2022

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*How you can get free vaccines and tests in South Florida even as COVID funding stalls*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:655J-Y751-DYJM-M4V0-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

April 6, 2022 Wednesday

Copyright 2022 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** coronavirus

**Length:** 816 words

**Byline:**  Howard Cohen

Miami Herald

**Body**

Florida may be closing all of its ***COVID***-19 mass public testing, vaccination and treatment sites due to a lack of federal funding. Miami-Dade, however, plans to continue to offer tests and vaccines free of charge at more than two dozen sites around the county using funding from the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

READ MORE: Florida closing its ***COVID*** sites, but Miami-Dade will keep free tests, vaccines open

What does this mean for you?

Can I still get a ***COVID*** test in Miami-Dade?

You can still get a test in Miami-Dade.

County Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** said FEMA would reimburse the county "100%" for providing tests and vaccines to the uninsured through July 1.

Visit the county's ***COVID*** testing finder at [*www.miamidade.gov/global/initiatives/coronavirus/testing-locations.page*](http://www.miamidade.gov/global/initiatives/coronavirus/testing-locations.page).

On the finder, type in your ZIP Code and a number of sites pop up with descriptions of tests offered, such as the PCR Nasal Swab test, which gives you results in a day or so and the Antigen Rapid Test which gives you results in an hour.

Among the free sites: Stephen P. Clark Center, Curtis Park, Shenandoah Park, Tropical Park, Kendall Indian Hammocks Park, A.D. Barnes Park, Zoo Miami. Note: The Salvation Army site on 911 W. Flagler St. is listed as temporarily closed. Miami International Airport's testing site charges a fee.

Can I still get a ***COVID*** test in Broward?

You can still get tested in Broward, for now, at eight sites. They include the Paul Hughes Health Center in Pompano Beach and the Boulevard Heights Community Center in Hollywood. But a couple are closing soon. The Broward ***COVID*** test finder is at [*www.broward.org/CoronaVirus/pages/collection-sites.aspx*](http://www.broward.org/CoronaVirus/pages/collection-sites.aspx). Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood Internation Airport's testing site charges a fee.

Among the sites closing permanently: Markham Park on Thursday, May 19. And Tradewinds Park on Wednesday, May 18.

READ MORE: Florida ***COVID*** weekly update: New cases trend up for the first time in a month

Can I still get a ***COVID vaccine*** in Miami-Dade?

IMG\_4863.jpegVaccines and boosters, including the Moderna booster, are available at Florida Publix locations free of charge. Publix does not offer ***COVID*** testing, however.

Yes, you can still get a ***vaccine*** at a Miami-Dade County site. Twenty-six sites are listed as providing free vaccines in the county at [*www.miamidade.gov/global/initiatives/coronavirus/****vaccine/vaccine****-locator.page*](http://www.miamidade.gov/global/initiatives/coronavirus/vaccine/vaccine-locator.page).

They include Harris Field in Homestead to the Barbara J. Jordan Health Center in Miami Gardens. And Zoo Miami in South Miami-Dade to the Little Haiti Clinic to the Miami Beach 17th Street Garage.

Can I still get a ***COVID vaccine*** in Broward?

Yes, vaccines are available in Broward at three sites you can find listed at [*www.broward.org/CoronaVirus/Pages/Vaccination-Sites.aspx--*](http://www.broward.org/CoronaVirus/Pages/Vaccination-Sites.aspx--) but not for long.

Here's where:

Nova Southeastern University walk up at 7901 SW 36th St., Suite 209, Davie. Site is open noon to 8 p.m. Monday through Wednesday and 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Saturday and Sunday. Pfizer is offered.

Reverend Samuel Delevoe Memorial Park drive-through at 2520 NW Sixth St., Fort Lauderdale. This vaccination site will close permanently on Friday, May 20. Until then the site is open 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday. Pfizer is offered.

Vizcaya Park walk up at 14200 SW 55th St., Miramar. This vaccination site will close permanently on Friday, April 15. Until then the site is open 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday.

READ MORE: Where can you get a ***COVID*** pill in Miami and the rest of South Florida? Here's your list

Can I still get a free ***COVID*** test or ***vaccine*** at a pharmacy?

Yes, tests and vaccines are available at pharmacies. At this time major pharmacies in Florida including Walgreens and CVS are still providing ***COVID*** tests and vaccines and boosters regardless of insurance. Publix and Winn-Dixie offer vaccines, not tests.

I'm uninsured. Can I still get a test, ***vaccine*** or booster?

For now, yes, the uninsured can still get services. The current supply of tests and vaccines was purchased by the federal government and remains free regardless of health insurance coverage.

But once that supply runs out, if Congress doesn't restore funding the feds can't buy more and that means people without health insurance would likely have to pay for testing and treatment. Or some people may have to rely on safety net hospitals, like Jackson Health, and other programs.

An outline of a $10 billion agreement with Congress was announced earlier this week, so stay tuned.

What about monoclonal antibody treatment?

Florida closed more than a dozen public sites that provided free monoclonal antibody treatments free after federal funding ended.

In Miami-Dade, CDR Health operated state-funded monoclonal antibody treatment sites at Miami Dade College North and Tropical Park. Both sites no longer provide therapeutics but continue to offer vaccination and testing.

Miami Herald staff writer Daniel Chang contributed to this report.

**Load-Date:** April 7, 2022

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Florida closing its COVID sites, but Miami-Dade will keep free tests, vaccines open*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:655C-0161-JC3J-X0CD-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

April 5, 2022 Tuesday

Copyright 2022 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** coronavirus

**Length:** 1620 words

**Byline:**  Daniel Chang

Miami Herald

**Body**

As Florida closes all of its ***COVID***-19 mass public testing, vaccination and treatment sites due to a lack of federal funding, Miami-Dade will continue to offer tests and vaccines free of charge at more than two dozen sites around the county using a different national resource: the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Though Miami-Dade Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** said FEMA would reimburse the county "100%" for providing tests and vaccines to the uninsured through July 1, it's not clear that the county will need to rely on FEMA that long after a bipartisan group of U.S. senators announced a deal on a $10 billion coronavirus aid package late Monday.

The agreement, which sets aside $5 billion for therapeutics, $750 million to prepare for future variants and the remainder for vaccines and testing, still needs approval from both chambers of Congress, and President Biden's signature.

Until then, Miami-Dade will use FEMA's Public Assistance Program to pay for tests and vaccines for the uninsured, Levine Cava said in a memo to commissioners on April 1.

"We will continue to make testing and vaccination as accessible as possible for those with or without insurance, to keep our community protected and our economy growing," Levine Cava said in an emailed statement. "We will continue testing our wastewater and sequencing test samples to help monitor for new variants, to stay ahead of the curve in case we face future surges."

New ***COVID*** Cases Rising

The issue of funding comes as new reported infections in Florida are rising due to the BA.2 subvariant, which now makes up 60% of new ***COVID***-19 cases in the Southeastern United States, which includes Florida, according to CDC monitoring data.

During the week ended April 5, Florida added 1,505 cases and 39 deaths per day, on average, according to Miami Herald calculations of data published by the CDC -- continuing a trend of rising cases that represent the first increase in over a month.

READ MORE: Florida ***COVID*** weekly update: New cases trend up for the first time in a month

For individuals with health insurance, ***COVID***-19 tests, treatments and vaccines are typically covered. But the delay in federal pandemic response funding has already led to a reduction in the nation's supply of monoclonal antibodies that can reduce the risk of hospitalization and death in infected persons.

The Florida Department of Health said the state will continue to distribute ***COVID***-19 monoclonal antibody treatments received from the federal government, which has purchased all of the medications and distributes them to states. But the White House warned in mid-March that the federal government would soon run out of money to buy more monoclonal antibodies, forcing it to scale back allocations to states by more than 30% unless Congress renewed funding by late March.

MIA\_Monoclonal\_Treatment\_MJ (8)A worker at a monoclonal antibody treatment site for ***COVID***-19 at Miami Dade College North Campus in Miami, Florida, on Wednesday, January 19, 2022. In April, as federal funds dried up, Florida closed more than a dozen public sites that provided free monoclonal antibody treatments throughout the state.

This week, as federal funds dried up, Florida closed more than a dozen public sites that provided monoclonal antibody treatments free of charge throughout the state, said Steve Vancore, a spokesman for CDR Health, a logistics company contracted to run the sites.

CDR Health has administered more than 4 million ***COVID***-19 tests, 2.7 million vaccines and more than 150,000 monoclonal antibody treatments throughout Florida during the pandemic, Vancore said. But after this week, the company will only offer testing, vaccination and monoclonal antibody treatments at its privately owned clinic in Tallahassee for insured and self-paying patients.

READ MORE: 'Healthiest people get monoclonal antibodies.' ***COVID*** therapy goes to those who need it less

In Miami-Dade, CDR Health operated state-funded monoclonal antibody treatment sites at Miami Dade College North and Tropical Park. Those sites no longer provide therapeutics but continue to offer vaccination and testing.

Lack of federal funds for ***COVID***-19

Pending renewal of pandemic funding from Congress, the federal government has run out of money to buy ***COVID***-19 tests, treatments and vaccines and provide them to individuals for free. Monoclonal antibody treatments promoted by Gov. Ron DeSantis, and new antiviral pills that reduce disease severity, also are bought in bulk by the federal government and distributed to states, pharmacies, community health centers and other providers for free.

But in March, the White House said the government would be unable to fulfill a planned order for monoclonal antibodies. The Biden administration, which had requested $22.5 billion in emergency funding, also warned that federal programs created to help states and local governments respond to the pandemic would have to end.

As a result, the federal government's Health Resources and Services Administration or HRSA ***COVID***-19 Uninsured Program stopped accepting reimbursement claims for ***COVID***-19 testing and treatment services on March 22 and stopped accepting claims for ***vaccine*** administration on Tuesday.

An outline of the $10 billion agreement announced Monday by Sen. Chuck Schumer of New York, the Democratic majority leader, and Sen. Mitt Romney, a Utah Republican, does not include funding for the HRSA uninsured program. But the deal reportedly has President Biden's support even though it is less than half of what the White House originally requested.

***vaccine***.jpgCOVID-19 ***vaccine***

Uninsured may have to pay for ***COVID*** testing, treatment

Though the HRSA program has stopped accepting claims for the uninsured, the current supply of tests, treatments and vaccines was purchased by the federal government and remains free to all individuals regardless of their health insurance coverage status.

But once that supply runs out, the federal government cannot buy more until Congress approves an appropriation. That means people without health insurance will likely have to pay for testing and treatment or rely on safety net hospitals and programs.

MIA\_Monoclonal\_Treatment\_MJ(2) (2)Workers outside a monoclonal antibody treatment site for ***COVID***-19 at Markham Park in Sunrise, Florida, on January 19, 2022.

The cost of a PCR test -- the kind used at hospitals and many state sites -- can range from $100 to $200. GlaxoSmithKline's monoclonal treatment, sotrovimab, costs $2,100 per dose. A dose of Regeneron's monoclonal antibody treatment costs the same amount.

Without free vaccines, tests and treatments, many Florida adults may be reluctant to seek care for ***COVID***-19, and those who do may need public resources to cover the costs.

About 19.5% of Floridians ages 18 to 64 years old had no health insurance coverage in 2020 -- compared with a national average of 14% for the same group, according to the National Health Interview Survey conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

In Miami-Dade, the taxpayer-owned Jackson Health System has seen a decline in the number of uninsured patients during the pandemic, said Mark Knight, chief financial officer. Part of the reason was an overall decline in visits to the emergency room, which many uninsured patients often use as a primary care provider.

As patient volumes have increased, though, Jackson Health is starting to see a return to a more familiar pre-pandemic mix of patients, including more people without health insurance, Knight said

That means the loss of the HRSA fund will add financial strain to Florida's largest safety net hospital if Congress does not restore funding. In March, Florida legislators voted to eliminate a Medicaid funding pool that subsidized Jackson Health and about two dozen other Florida hospitals with a disproportionately high share of low-income and uninsured patients.

And two years into the pandemic, Jackson Health and other hospitals are struggling with staff burnout and added labor costs for overtime pay, bonuses and travel agency staffing. Knight said Jackson Health has about 1,000 job vacancies, including about 400 for registered nurses, because there's a shortage of qualified workers and stiff competition for them.

"The impact of all these things is negative," he said.

READ MORE: 'We never ran from it.' ***COVID*** left emotional scars on South Florida's healthcare heroes

Preparing for ***COVID*** resurgence

With the omicron subvariant BA.2 fueling an uptick in cases, and a potential pandemic resurgence on the horizon, Miami-Dade's Emergency Management Director Charles Cyrille said he's keeping a close eye on the share of recent local tests that come back positive, known as the positivity rate.

Cyrille said most of the county's 30 sites will continue to provide both tests and vaccines, though some will only provide testing, and hours will vary.

Once FEMA funding runs out, if Congress does not renew ***COVID***-19 response funding Cyrille said he knows, "There will be difficult decisions."

Cyrille said Miami-Dade's testing and vaccination "infrastructure is way larger than anyone else in the state. We lead the state in our response efforts." He said the county was able to respond quickly to the rise of the omicron variant in December and January because it had kept many of those services available to the public.

But Cyrille said he knows that the county could not have done it alone.

"The federal government has shouldered 100% of this," he said. "It's not possible to do it without them."

Watch N95 masks arrive to Winn-Dixie stores in North FloridaFree N95 masks have begun to arrive at Winn-Dixie, Fresco y Más and Harveys Supermarket stores in Florida. The masks are part of the federal government's new strategy to combat ***COVID***-19.

**Load-Date:** April 6, 2022

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Miami-Dade mayor losing top COVID advisor as Dr. Paige to leave Jackson hospital*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6519-HK31-DYJM-M38F-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

March 17, 2022 Thursday

Copyright 2022 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** miami\_dade

**Length:** 394 words

**Byline:**  Douglas Hanks

Miami Herald

**Body**

Dr. Peter Paige, a senior physician at the Jackson Health hospital system who advised Miami-Dade Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** on ***COVID*** policies, is leaving for a post in New York.

Levine Cava announced Paige's departure in a Twitter post Thursday afternoon.

Her first official act as mayor after being elected in November 2020 was naming Paige to the unpaid newly created post of chief medical officer to advise her on Miami-Dade's ***COVID***-19 response. Paige retained his position overseeing Jackson physicians as an executive vice president and chief clinical officer at the county's public hospital system.

Paige is leaving for a post in New York to be closer to family there, Jackson's president said in a note to employees Thursday. Paige joined Jackson in 2013 and will leave in May.

Paige usually did not join Levine Cava for her public appearances about the county's ***COVID*** response. But he consulted with the mayor on ***COVID*** policies and emergency orders that she issued connected to ***mask*** wearing, hospital data collection and her attempt, later dropped, to require vaccinations or regular ***COVID***-19 testing of Miami-Dade employees. In interviews and public statements, Levine Cava frequently cited Paige in explaining her decisions related to public health measures.

Paige\_Peter.jpgDr. Peter Paige, chief physician executive at Jackson Health System and top medical advisor to Miami-Dade County Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava***, is leaving Miami for a job in New York.

Miami-Dade leads Florida in vaccination rates and boasts the largest vaccination and testing network in the state. In February, Levine Cava ended ***mask*** requirements in county buildings.

"As my first act as Mayor, I was proud to appoint our first-ever Chief Medical Officer, Dr. Peter Paige," Levine Cava wrote. "Everyday since, he has helped lead our county's ***COVID***-19 response responsibly and effectively, mobilizing a unified County-wide strategy."

Levine Cava's announcement didn't address whether she would replace Paige with a different medical advisor.

In an afternoon note to employees, Jackson President Don Steigman called Paige a "transformational leader."

"With the onset of the ***COVID***-19 pandemic in 2020," Steigman wrote, "Dr. Paige was integral in developing the protocols and policies that have helped keep our patients, employees, and communities safe during a historic global health crisis."

**Load-Date:** March 17, 2022

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Conservatives queue up culture message; Making high court history; Deceiving abuela*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64WJ-60J1-DYJM-M3P3-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

February 28, 2022 Monday

Copyright 2022 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** politics\_policy\_in\_sunshine\_state

**Length:** 2699 words

**Byline:**  Mary Ellen Klas

Newsletters |

**Body**

It's Monday, Feb. 28. and Florida is now officially the center of the conservative universe.

The largest annual gathering of conservatives in the country met in Orlando for the annual Conservative Action Political Conference for four days last week, and their message was a rerun of what we've heard all legislative session: It's time to go to war over American culture.

Rescue from radicals: They portrayed Democrats as taking advantage of a global pandemic to consolidate power over individual liberties. They warned that conservatives must "take our country back" from the "radical left" and they questioned the existence of transgender people, suggesting that the "woke" agenda attempts to sow "gender confusion" over two sexes.

CPACTrump.JPGFormer President Donald Trump speaks at the Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC) Saturday, Feb. 26, 2022, in Orlando, Fla.

No mention of Putin: Meanwhile, across the globe, as Russian invaders were demonstrating what it means to destroy individual liberties, right-wing activist Charlie Kirk told the CPAC crowd that the invasion in Ukraine was far less important than the "invasion" of undocumented immigrants into the United States. The line received raucous applause.

Biden blame: When the Russian invasion of Ukraine was mentioned, it was in the context of blaming Biden, specifically alleging that because Biden promoted an environmental agenda, the U.S. was dependent on Russian oil.

WHAT WE'RE TALKING ABOUT

Former President Donald Trump, who spoke on Saturday, took credit for the movement and Republican speakers also included Gov. Ron DeSantis and Florida Senators Marco Rubio and Rick Scott.

Pandemic protocols were "Marxist": Rubio compared public health measures designed to prevent the spread of the coronavirus to Marxism because they require people "to produce papers to go in somewhere, to sit somewhere."

CPACScott.JPGSen. Rick Scott, R-Fla., speaks at the Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC) Saturday, Feb. 26, 2022, in Orlando, Fla. (AP Photo/John Raoux)

Scott wants low-earners taxed: Scott issued his "11 Point Plan to Rescue America" ahead of his appearance at the conference. It called for "rescuing" the nation by declaring men and women biologically different, raising taxes on low-income earners, and spurring children to recite the Pledge of Allegiance. He also wants to eliminate all questions relating to race, ethnicity, or skin color on any government forms and punish universities for taking into consideration race on admissions forms.

As chairman of the National Republican Senatorial Committee, Scott's plan comes as Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell has declined to release a broader agenda for the GOP conference if the party retakes the Senate in 2022. But Scott's idea received a cold reception from many Republicans, who immediately distanced themselves from parts of the proposal. And Democrats welcomed the chance to hit Republicans on raising taxes on working families, particularly during a period of high inflation.

CPACDeSantis.JPGFlorida Gov. Ron DeSantis speaks at the Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC) Thursday, Feb. 24, 2022, in Orlando, Fla.

Opponents are sinister: DeSantis used his speech to raise the stakes in the culture wars -- saying that unless Republicans fight back against "woke-ism," they will become "second-class citizens." He suggested that Democrats "want to delegitimize our founding institutions" and "replace it with something that will be much, much more sinister."

Popular governor: DeSantis came away with the biggest consolation prize of the convention, however. In a survey of CPAC attendees, asking them which candidate they would support for president in 2024, Trump came in first with 59%, while 28% said they would support the Florida governor.

MIA\_HallandaleBeach\_RUSSIA\_Local0721JAIHallandale Beach, Florida, February 24, 2022 - Members of the Ukrainian and Russian communities in South Florida gathered in front of Hallandale Beach City Hall in support of the Ukraine after Russian forces invaded the country earlier in the day.

South Florida protests: As Putin amped up the rhetoric over the weekend, saying he was now putting Russia's nuclear forces on "high alert," tensions rose. In South Florida, hundreds of people, including many from both Ukrainian and Russian roots, gathered near Hallandale Beach City Hall to protest the Russian attacks.

Seeking TPS status: Two former top U.S. immigration officials from Miami urged President Joe Biden on Sunday to extend immigration protections to eligible Ukrainians in the United States, following the Russian military invasion of the eastern European nation. Emilio T. González, the head U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services under former President George W. Bush, and Leon Rodriguez, who headed the agency under former President Barack Obama, asked Biden in a one-page letter to give Ukrainian nationals in the U.S. Temporary Protection Status. They argued the the act was created for these kinds of humanitarian crises.

MIA\_Voter\_Change\_MJO\_1Juan Salazar, 77, holds his voter registration cards outside of his apartment home in the Little Havana neighborhood of Miami, Florida, on Saturday, Feb. 5, 2022. Salazar explained his party affiliation was changed from Democrat to Republican without his permission.

Deception at the door: A Miami Herald investigation found that Republican Party of Florida canvassers visited eight apartment complexes in Miami-Dade County last year and changed the voter registration of more than 130 elderly Hispanic voters to Republican without their consent. Many of the voters -- largely low-income, first-generation immigrants -- described being misled by the canvassers into signing forms that they thought were for new voter cards.

Legislators increase penalties: The Miami-Dade County State Attorney is conducting a criminal investigation into the alleged voter fraud, but state lawmakers are also responding. An amendment to the governor's plan to create an election's security office includes a provision to enact stricter penalties for changing someone's voter registration information without their knowledge.

SupremeCourtVacancy (2).JPGJudge Ketanji Brown Jackson, who is a U.S. Circuit Judge on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit, poses for a portrait, Friday, Feb., 18, 2022, in her office at the court in Washington. President Joe Biden on Friday nominated federal appeals court Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson to the U.S. Supreme Court, making her the first Black woman selected to serve on a court that once declared her race unworthy of citizenship and endorsed segregation. (AP Photo/Jacquelyn Martin)

Miami's Supreme: President Joe Biden made good on his campaign promise and nominated federal appeals Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson for the U.S. Supreme Court last week, a historic pick which will make the Miami Palmetto High School graduate the first Black woman on the nation's high court. She must first successfully navigate the often grueling confirmation process in the U.S. Senate. But she's been there before. She had received bipartisan support for her confirmation last year to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit.

GOP criticizes: Biden's choice to nominate Brown Jackson, who grew up in Miami, was blasted by Republicans at CPAC, who characterized her as a Harvard elite and former public defender who often took opportunities to take shots at former President Donald Trump.

House HB 8017The Florida House has proposed a new map that attempts to appease the governor's configuration for a North Florida minority district. But, n a signal that it considers the governor's proposal vulnerable to being invalidated by a court, the House released a second map that restores the North Florida district as a back-up plan.

DeSantis gains ground on redistricting: Under pressure from the governor to dismantle a North Florida congressional district designed to elect a Black representative to Congress, the Florida House advanced a map that does much of what the governor wants but also added a backup plan. The House Redistricting Committee passed two maps: the first map that creates a Duval-centric district but diminishes Black voting strength in North Florida; the second map is similar to the map that passed the state Senate but favors more Republicans. If the court invalidates the first map, the second will take effect in law.

Both new House maps give Republicans the partisan advantage DeSantis had sought with the maps he proposed and legislators rejected. They allow for the likely election of 18 Republicans and 10 Democrats, giving Republicans two additional seats over the 16-10 configuration in Congress today.

WHAT WE'RE WATCHING

RON DESANTIS' LEGISLATIVE SCORECARD:

Aside from redistricting, the governor continued to rack up wins in the Legislature last week. Here's an update:

rally.jpgDemonstrators at a Safe Schools South Florida event in Wilton Manors rally against a bill in the state Legislature dubbed "Don't Say Gay" that would forbid discussions of gender identity and sexuality in public schools.

Chilling teachers, enabling parents: The so-called "Don't Say Gay" bill passed the House last week and will get its final hearing in the Senate on Monday. Supporters argue the measure would give parents more control over classroom instruction about gender identity or sexual orientation. Opponents worry it will have a chilling effect on what can be taught in the classroom and could harm LGBTQ students. Late Sunday, legislators were still waiting for an analysis from the Florida Department of Education.

Racial tension targeted: Another measure, which the governor has labeled the "Stop W.O.K.E. Act" and says it is intended to prevent teachers from making students feel uncomfortable over events they did not play a role in, also passed the House and is now waiting for passage in the Senate.

The bill's sponsor, Rep. Bryan Avila, R-Miami Gardens, said the bill will uphold principles that "no race is inherently superior to another race" and that "no one race is inherently racist." He also contended it would not prevent the teaching of historical facts but was meant to keep out ideologies.

ladapo.jpgDr. Joseph Ladapo, Florida's surgeon general, says he can't communicate when wearing a ***mask***.

Ladapo confirmed: After a contentious approval process, the Florida Senate voted along party lines to confirm Dr. Joseph Ladapo as the governor's pick to be the state's surgeon general.

Immigration bill: The governor's proposal to prohibit the state from contracting with transportation companies that bring immigrants into Florida on behalf of the federal government is on the fast track for Senate approval. The proposal would also expand the scope of a 2019 law that barred so-called sanctuary cities in the state, five months after a federal judge in Miami deemed portions of the law unconstitutional and tinged with "discriminatory motives."

428405 CEBA 12 Abortion02xxDanielle Tallafuss, 35, poses for a portrait with a corduroy dinosaur she bought for Nathaniel in her bedroom on Monday, Feb. 21, 2022. Danielle and her husband decided to terminate her pregnancy at 22 weeks after learning that Nathaniel would have been born with hypoplastic left heart syndrome, an underdevelopment of the left side of the heart, to protect their child from the toll his condition would take on his life. Danielle said she held onto the dinosaur when she had the abortion.

The fetal abnormalities dilemma: The Legislature's proposal to prohibit most abortions after 15 weeks of pregnancy is awaiting a vote in the Senate, where it is expected to pass. Doctors say that many fetal abnormalities often are not detected that early, which could lead to a mother giving birth to a child with serious medical issues. As legislators spent hours debating the issue in the last few weeks, much of the debate has been couched in hypotheticals. But for Danielle and Jason Tallafuss, the conversation isn't hypothetical. It's a decision they made. And if the bill passes, it's a decision other families won't be allowed to make.

WhatsApp Image 2022-02-24 at 1.54.17 PM (2).jpegAs the administrative hearing was taking place, hundreds of Latino Evangelicals from across Florida gathered at the state Capitol to voice their opposition to DeSantis' immigration platform.

Punishing children's shelters: The Department of Children & Families last week moved forward with a proposed rule to deny licenses to shelters, foster agencies, and foster homes that care for and house unaccompanied migrant children on behalf of the federal government, unless Florida agrees to a resettlement agreement with the feds. The DeSantis administration has said it will no longer participate in the resettlement program, alleging it encourages child trafficking. Last year, several child-care facilities, child-placing agencies and 60 foster homes served more than 4,000 unaccompanied migrant children in Florida.

FPL's subsidy contradiction: Florida Power & Light's opposition to net metering for solar customers contradicts its other policies in which it requires some ratepayers to subsidize others, critics say. The company wants legislators to slash the state's net metering incentives because, it says, they are unfair. Meanwhile, the company has imposed several other policies that also require some customers to subsidize others. IMG\_solar.jpg\_3\_1\_58J4CV73\_L596580684.JPGWorkers install solar panels at a home in South Miami-Dade County in 2015.

Net-metering's poison pill? A proposal emerged last week that would require utilities to wait four years before the financial incentives for rooftop solar are eliminated but also gave them a sweetener. If rooftop solar expands fast in that time, utilities would be allowed to charge all customers higher fees to recover any lost revenue from the solar competition.

surgen.JPGFlorida Gov. Ron DeSantis with his son, Mason, listen as Dr. Joseph Ladapo, Florida surgeon general, addresses the media during a news conference in Jacksonville, Fla., on Tuesday, Jan. 4, 2022 to discuss ***COVID***-19 testing policy and monoclonal antibody treatment availability. The event was relocated from the Department of Children and Families office building to the adjacent FDLE building after protesters, wanting to address the governor, refused to leave the initial news conference site. (Bob Self/The Florida Times-Union via AP)

Anti-CDC rules: DeSantis and Ladapo unveiled a series of nonbinding ***COVID***-19 guidelines last week in an attempt to buck the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Among the guidelines: businesses can stop requiring employees to wear masks and a five-day quarantine is required after testing positive for ***COVID***-19 if there's no fever and symptoms are improving. Public health experts immediately criticized their claim that "there is no proven significant clinical benefit for facial coverings" because it contradicts available scientific data and they said was not suitable for public health messaging during a pandemic.

cava.jpgAt a Dec. 22 press conference, Miami-Dade Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** urges residents to continue to use masks in order to stop the spread of the omicron variant.

Miami-Dade lifts restrictions: Two months after the omicron variant hit a record-breaking 7-day positivity rate of 35% in Miami-Dade, cases have plunged, and now so have the emergency restrictions intended to lower infection rates. Miami-Dade Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** said that with the county positivity rate now at 5%, in addition to a significant decrease in hospitalizations, the county is lifting its indoor ***mask*** requirement at libraries, government offices and park facilities.

Follow us for weekly updates. Miami Herald Capitol Bureau Chief Mary Ellen Klas curates the Politics and Policy in the Sunshine State newsletter. If you have any ideas or suggestions, please drop me a note at [*meklas@miamiherald.com*](mailto:meklas@miamiherald.com)

Please subscribe! We are offering a special offer for newsletter readers: Unlimited digital access of just $.99 a month for newsletter readers. Please check it out!

Know someone who'd like to get this newsletter? Send this to a friend to receive it weekly.

**Load-Date:** February 28, 2022

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Heat ends mask mandate for games at FTX Arena. A look at the updated COVID-19 guidelines*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64W4-X071-DYJM-M1TV-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

February 26, 2022 Saturday

Copyright 2022 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** miami\_heat

**Length:** 1000 words

**Byline:**  Anthony Chiang

Miami Herald

**Body**

Just one day after the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention eased its ***mask*** guidelines that were in place to slow the spread of ***COVID***-19, the Miami Heat announced it's doing the same.

The Heat announced ahead of Saturday night's home game against the San Antonio Spurs: "Effective immediately, per the latest CDC and Miami-Dade County recommendations, ***mask*** wearing will now be strongly recommended throughout FTX Arena for all guests other than in the red zone where it will still be mandated for all Miami Heat home games. Masking requirements for non-Heat events will be subject to promoter preference."

Takeaways and details, as Heat showcases depth to return from break with win over Knicks

While "strongly recommended," guests are now not mandated to wear a ***mask*** for Heat games at FTX Arena unless their ticket is for a seat within 15 feet of the court, which the team has labeled the "Red Zone." The current estimation for "Red Zone" seats at FTX Arena is about 700.

Previously this season, all guests, including those fully vaccinated, over 2 years old were required to wear a ***mask*** for games at FTX Arena unless they were actively eating or drinking.

This change for Heat home games comes after the CDC announced Friday that it's no longer advised to wear masks in public when indoors for most who are healthy in the United States based on new metrics being considered to "help communities decide what prevention steps to take based on the latest data."

About 70 percent of the U.S. is living in an area with low or medium ***COVID***-19 community levels, according to the agency, as of Thursday. Those who are healthy in these areas aren't recommended to ***mask*** up in indoor public settings.

Also on Friday, Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** announced that masks are no longer required in Miami-Dade County's libraries, government offices and park facilities as the county's ***COVID***-19 "crisis" approach toward ***COVID***-19 comes to an end.

For those over 2 years old seated in the "Red Zone" or with tickets that grant access to this area, guests will still have three options for entry into FTX Arena: Show proof of full vaccination, show proof of a negative ***COVID***-19 test (PCR or rapid antigen test results are accepted) or take a free rapid antigen test at the arena.

A no bag policy remains in effect at FTX Arena. Exceptions will be made for small bags, as well as medical and infant bags.

In addition, the entire arena, including all merchandise stations, concession stands, bars, and premium dining spaces, remains cashless. Accepted forms of payment include credit and debit cards, Apple Pay, Google Pay, Samsung Pay and NFC chip enabled cards. Reverse ATMs are also located on site to convert cash into a prepaid debit card.

The Heat began last season in December 2020 with no fans in attendance for home games amid the pandemic before allowing a limited crowd to attend in January 2021. Miami then slowly increased capacity throughout last season and eventually allowed up to 17,000 fans to attend games during its first-round playoff series against the Milwaukee Bucks in May.

The Heat opened this season in a home arena operating at its full capacity of 19,600.

For more information on what to expect while attending Heat games at FTX Arena, visit the team's ***COVID***-19 fan safety website.

HEAT LOVE IN NEW YORK

"Let's Go Heat" chants have met the Heat at various road arenas this season. It happened again in the Heat's 115-100 road win over the New York Knicks at Madison Square Garden, the home of one of Miami's biggest rivals over the years.

"I just think that's all strange. That's weird to me," coach Erik Spoelstra said of hearing pro-Heat chants at Madison Square Garden. "You know who my boss is. That was my introduction to this league is those Heat-Knicks battles and everything that came with that, particularly in the Garden. But hey, we've been dealing with that for years with Knicks fans at our place, so it's probably apropos to turn the tables now."

The Heat and Knicks met in the playoffs in four straight seasons from 1997-2000, and they were heated matchups. Those series came a few years after Pat Riley abruptly left the Knicks to become the Heat's coach and president in 1995.

BUTLER SPEAKS

Heat star Jimmy Butler was fined $25,000 "for violating league rules governing media interview access and for his noncompliance with the resulting NBA investigation," the league announced in a statement on Friday. The fine stemmed from Butler choosing not to speak to the media following Sunday's All-Star Game in Cleveland.

When asked about the fine following Friday night's win in New York, Butler said: "I'm lucky I got a good teammate like [P.J. Tucker], who said he was going to cover my fine. So I'm not tripping. I love you, Tuck."

Butler also joked that Knicks coach Tom Thibodeau doesn't talk to him anymore. Thibodeau served as Butler's head coach with the Chicago Bulls and Minnesota Timberwolves.

Asked why Thibodeau has stopped speaking to him, Butler responded with a smile: "I don't know, man. He's mad at me because we beat him all the time."

The Heat won its fifth straight game against the Knicks on Friday. Miami has won nine of its last 10 matchups against New York.

The Heat remains without Markieff Morris (return to competition reconditioning) and Victor Oladipo (right knee injury recovery) on Saturday against the Spurs. Dewayne Dedmon, who has missed the last three games, is listed as questionable with lower back spasms.

Those are the only three Heat players on the injury report for Saturday's game.

Developmental forward Haywood Highsmith's first standard 10-day deal with the Heat expired following Friday's game. The Heat plans to bring him back on a second 10-day contract, according to a league source.

Haywood's second 10-day deal with Miami was not yet official as of Saturday afternoon.

NBA teams are allowed to sign a player to two standard 10-day contracts before they are forced to sign them for the rest of the season if they want to retain them.

heatcheck2208

**Load-Date:** February 26, 2022

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Mask rules lifted in Miami-Dade buildings. Mayor: COVID 'crisis' approach is ending*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64VY-K671-DYJM-M4JV-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

February 25, 2022 Friday

Copyright 2022 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** miami\_dade

**Length:** 664 words

**Byline:**  Douglas Hanks

Miami Herald

**Body**

Masks are no longer required in Miami-Dade County's libraries, government offices and park facilities after Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** on Friday announced an end to the ***COVID***-19 "crisis" approach toward a virus that has surged and retreated since the first wave of infections in early 2020.

In a video message recorded days after she ended isolation from a minor bout with ***COVID*** herself, Levine Cava said the recent plunge in cases across Miami-Dade means the county no longer needs emergency restrictions related to the virus.

Along with lifting her Dec. 22 masking order for county buildings, Levine Cava said she'll stop requirements that hospitals report ***COVID*** admissions and other virus-related statistics to the county every day.

"Two months ago the omicron variant surged in our community, with a record-breaking 7-day positivity rate of 35%," Levine Cava said in the message posted on her Twitter account Friday morning. "Two months later, I'm proud to share we've been on a steady decline and our positivity rate is now at 5%, in addition to a significant decrease in hospitalizations."

Masks no longer required at Miami-Dade courts

Shortly after the Levine Cava announcement, the chief judge for Miami-Dade Circuit Court said masks would no longer be required in courthouses. "I'm very grateful to our judges, court staff and court partners for doing their part in keeping everyone who comes through our doors safe," Chief Judge Nushin Sayfie said in a statement.

While the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention eased federal ***mask*** guidelines Friday afternoon, ***mask*** requirements remain for public transit, airplanes and airports.

Levine Cava outlined a four-point strategy focusing on booster shots, working with Miami-Dade schools to get students vaccinated as eligibility expands and encouraging businesses to have workers stay home when sick.

Levine Cava also said the county's testing approach would encourage people to get tested not only when symptomatic, but when "exposed" to the virus.

That runs counter to guidance from the administration of Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, which discourages people from getting a ***COVID*** test without symptoms.

Miami-Dade ***COVID*** emergency remains officially in place

Despite announcing a new approach to ***COVID*** that shifts Miami-Dade "from crisis mode to safety mode," Levine Cava kept the two-year state of emergency for the virus in place. First signed by her predecessor, Carlos Gimenez, on March 12, 2020, the state of emergency has been extended weekly since then by order of the mayor.

DeSantis ended Florida's state of emergency in June, 475 days after it began.

Levine Cava's office released a statement that said the state of emergency allows for emergency contracting and spending that helped speed up testing expansions in the early days of omicron spread in December.

"Thanks to it, we were able to quickly and aggressively ramp up our services to respond to the recent Omicron surge," the statement read. "Should a new surge of ***COVID***-19 cases affect our community in the near future, Miami-Dade County government will once again respond quickly to provide potentially life-saving care and services to our residents."

Levine Cava said Miami-Dade would continue monitoring ***COVID*** testing and samples from wastewater to get ahead of any future variant spikes. In November, when the delta variant had receded, Levine Cava lifted ***mask*** rules in county buildings, too, only to reimpose the rules weeks later.

Levine Cava's latest decision to end to the ***COVID*** masking rule in county buildings came days after she resumed public appearances following a positive test for the virus on Feb. 17. Levine Cava said she experienced mild symptoms, and followed federal guidelines to end isolation after five days.

"Now, don't get me wrong. ***COVID***-19 has not been vanquished," Levine Cava said in her video. "But we are prepared ... We know how to best defend ourselves."

Miami Herald staff writer David Ovalle contributed to this report.

**Load-Date:** February 25, 2022

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*'Unfortunately, I tested positive.' Miami-Dade Mayor Levine Cava has 2nd case of COVID*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64TF-4DF1-DYJM-M267-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

February 18, 2022 Friday

Copyright 2022 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** miami\_dade

**Length:** 342 words

**Byline:**  Carli Teproff and Douglas Hanks

Miami Herald

**Body**

Miami-Dade Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** said Friday she is "quarantining at home" after testing positive for ***COVID***-19 -- for the second time since the pandemic began.

"This morning, I took a ***COVID***-19 test as standard protocol after experiencing mild symptoms," she said on Twitter. "Unfortunately, I tested positive. I 'm grateful that I'm fully vaccinated and boosted."

Loren Parra, Levine Cava's communications director, said the mayor began feeling ill Thursday afternoon.

Levine Cava did not wear a ***mask*** Thursday while speaking at an indoor symposium held by the Bilzin law firm, according to photos from the event.

Poll: Do you still wear a ***COVID mask*** in places where it's not required anymore?

Parra said the mayor's office is contacting organizers of events the mayor attended recently to notify them of possible exposure.

Federal CDC guidelines have loosened in terms of what people who are recently vaccinated or boosted for ***COVID***-19 after possible exposure. The guidelines call for people to wear masks for 10 days and test, if possible, after five days. The mayor is following CDC guidelines, which call for someone who tests positive with symptoms to stay home for at least five days, then wear a ***mask*** for five days after that.

Under a Levine Cava order from late last year, masks are required in county buildings.

Recent days saw Levine Cava switch to a victory theme in her daily Twitter posts about county ***COVID*** statistics, which have been improving. On Feb. 14, when the daily rate of positive ***COVID*** tests dipped to 10% countywide, Levine Cava said on Twitter: "We're beating Omicron."

This is the second time that Levine Cava -- who recently gave her state of the county address -- has had the virus. In November 2020, Levine Cava announced she had tested positive and was experiencing mild symptoms.

In Friday's message, Levine Cava, who lost her father Paul Levine to ***COVID*** in September 2021, stayed positive: "Miami-Dade has come a long way -- our positivity rate is below 10% and we are finally seeing the light at the end of this dark tunnel."

**Load-Date:** February 18, 2022

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Celebrities silenced at Miami International Airport, but the mayor's voice lives on*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64MR-41H1-JC3J-X3T5-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

January 27, 2022 Thursday

Copyright 2022 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** naked\_politics

**Length:** 253 words

**Byline:**  Douglas Hanks

Miami Herald

**Body**

Flo Rida's time as a voice of Miami International Airport has come to an end, but the mayor's public-announcer privileges continue.

In a memo to county commissioners, Miami-Dade Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** said her administration recently retired the airport's two-year-old "Voices of MIA" program that aired welcome messages from Flo Rida, Chef Pepín, Trina and other celebrities with Miami connections.

The audio edits followed an October resolution sponsored by Miami-Dade Commissioner Jean Monestime to add Portuguese and Creole to the airport's existing English and Spanish announcements, but also find a way to cut back on the messages.

The main voice now: Levine Cava herself, welcoming passengers and reciting federal ***COVID***-19 ***mask*** rules in English, Spanish, Creole and Portuguese.

The MIA Voices program started under then-Mayor Carlos Gimenez, whose voice also greeted passengers at MIA with a welcoming message. MIA ended the celebrity announcements on Oct. 24, and Levine Cava's 66-second message is now played every 30 minutes -- down from a 15-minute rotation before the changes. The airport also airs messages by the federal Transportation Security Administration about unattended bags and prohibited carry-on items.

Greg Chin, an Aviation spokesperson, said the decision to end the celebrity greetings was made by senior administrators "in order to accommodate the length of the essential PA messages that are now in four languages."

"Time constraints only allowed for one welcome to MIA message," he said.

**Load-Date:** January 27, 2022

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*'We were right, and they were wrong.' DeSantis highlights division in annual speech*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64HB-WVX1-JC3J-X0V0-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

January 11, 2022 Tuesday

Copyright 2022 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** state\_politics

**Length:** 1761 words

**Byline:**  Lawrence Mower, Mary Ellen Klas and Ana Ceballos

Miami Herald

**Dateline:** TALLAHASSEE

**Body**

Gov. Ron DeSantis had a simple message to Floridians during his address to state lawmakers on Tuesday.

"We were right," he said, "and they were wrong."

Celebrating a booming economy and riding high in the polls during his run for reelection, DeSantis echoed his talking points over the last year during his State of the State address to state lawmakers on Tuesday.

Florida was right to reopen the state early, he said. The federal government's restrictions are wrong. Ideas such as critical race theory must be stamped out, and China and the U.S. border with Mexico remain threats.

"While so many around the country have consigned the people's rights to the graveyard, Florida has stood as freedom's vanguard," he said. "Florida has become the escape hatch for those chafing under authoritarian, arbitrary and seemingly never-ending mandates and restrictions."

The address marks the start of Florida's annual legislative session in Tallahassee, when lawmakers convene for 60 days to pass laws and craft a state budget for the next fiscal year.

Overshadowing everything this session is the 2022 election, as well as redistricting and the 2024 presidential election, which DeSantis is widely seen as eyeing.

Dept. of Education bid process goes awry. Insiders try to compete with favored vendor

Unlike legislators, who have a self-imposed ban on fundraising during the session, the governor can continue to raise money. In the last several months, every time he has held a rally-style news conference to announce a legislative proposal, his election team would follow with a fundraising pitch to supporters.

DeSantis has spent the last several months outlining many of the things he wants from lawmakers this session. He wants a new elections security office, enhanced penalties for some election law violations, $8 million to remove "unauthorized aliens" from Florida, a ban on critical race theory in schools and businesses, $1,000 bonuses for teachers and first responders, suspending $1 billion in gas tax collections for about five months this year and passing a proposed $99.7 billion state budget.

Several of his proposals, including suspending gas tax collections, are being subsidized by federal coronavirus relief dollars issued by the federal government.

The Democratic challengers for governor are also competing for attention. Agriculture Commissioner Nikki Fried, former Republican Gov. Charlie Crist -- now a St. Petersburg congressman -- and state Sen. Annette Taddeo of Miami are each eager to exploit what they see as the governor's mistakes.

"This governor couldn't lead Florida out of a paper bag, let alone a once in a lifetime pandemic," Fried said Tuesday. "And it shows in the so-called priorities he outlined today."

Ahead of DeSantis' speech, Crist released a video criticizing the governor, saying DeSantis and his donors are thriving while working Floridians struggle to access housing, healthcare and fairly priced utilities.

"This is Gov. DeSantis. He's not there to help unless, of course, you cut him a check," Crist said in the video.

Miami-Dade Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava***, who was in the Capitol, said after the governor's speech that she disagrees with the governor's perception of freedom.

"Freedom means that millions of immigrants will be able to flee their authoritarian regimes and disasters and corruption and start a new life here in Florida. That is freedom,'' she told reporters. "And our state has welcomed the parents and the grandparents of so many of our legislators from foreign countries and their children and yet, right now, state agencies are shutting down organizations that are serving children who are arriving from Venezuela, Cuba and Nicaragua and other repressive regimes. And this is not freedom."

Simpson focuses on environment, foster care, preemption

Senate President Wilton Simpson, a Trilby Republican, is running to succeed Fried as agriculture commissioner. He used his opening day speech to focus on the environmental record legislators have pursued for several years -- an issue central to farmers in Florida -- but offered no new initiatives.

Buoyed with billions in federal stimulus money, Simpson said the state will continue to invest in the environmental programs of the past. Simpson, who was adopted as a child, also spoke about continuing investments in foster care and making foster children "a priority."

"This session we have a chance to sow the seeds that will grow our future," he said.

IMG\_6277.jpgMiami-Dade County Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** talks to Emergency Management Director Kevin Guthrie in the Florida Capitol on Tuesday, Jan. 11, 2022, in Tallahassee.

In a change, he said he would keep a "sharp eye out" for legislation that would hamper local governments' ability to adopt local ordinances. For years, GOP lawmakers have exerted control over local governments on topics ranging from police budgets to clean energy initiatives.

But Simpson said he supported a controversial bill this year (Senate Bill 620) that would require local governments to conduct a fiscal impact statement before passing a local ordinance. The bill would also allow business owners to sue for any losses their companies take because of the ordinance.

"It's been said that 'with great power comes great responsibility,' " Simpson said Tuesday. "We want to ensure that local governments are exercising one with the other."

Levine Cava said that "freedom also means not having the state dictate what we can or cannot do at the local level and by tying hands with preemption bills," as lawmakers are attempting to do again this year.

Dark money group seeks to block disclosure of donor names in ghost candidate probe

The opening day of the session is the only day lobbyists are allowed on the floor of the House and Senate chambers, as former presiding officers and legislators are allowed to sit amid their former colleagues even as they represent clients before them.

Unlike last session, when the Capitol was mostly closed to the public and ***COVID***-19 testing of lawmakers and staff was a weekly priority on the Capitol grounds, there was little evidence of the pandemic left this year.

As the House and Senate convened, there were few on the floor and in the gallery wearing masks, except for reporters. Social distancing is still encouraged inside committee rooms in the House and Senate.

FloridaStateoftheState (3).JPGFlorida Gov. Ron DeSantis, right, answers questions from reporters after addressing a joint session of the Legislature, Tuesday, Jan. 11, 2022, in Tallahassee, Fla.

Previewing the Florida Legislature's 2022 session: issues to watchCritical race theory, immigration, redistricting, preemption, voter fraud, abortion restrictions... The reporters from the Miami Herald/Tampa Bay Times Tallahassee Bureau share their thoughts on what they'll be watching at the Capitol in 2022.

Sprowls' civics curriculum proposal

The rejection of pandemic-related restrictions in favor of economic freedom was a consistent theme during the address to lawmakers by House Speaker Chris Sprowls, R-Palm Harbor.

Sprowls said public health officials "aren't saints, and they aren't sinners." Instead, they were "ordinary government bureaucrats," he said, "no different than the insurance industry lobbyists, nursing home owners [and] criminal justice reform advocates."

"They spend their days looking through a narrow keyhole, and they see the world in monochrome," Sprowls said. "It's our job as legislators to see the entire horizon, the full spectrum."

Sprowls introduced a plan to distribute a civics curriculum, developed by state representatives and teachers, to every fourth-grade classroom in the state.

"I'm especially excited to share with you that the curriculum has a component that will allow each one of you as a legislator to participate in teaching our fourth-graders about state government and civics," Sprowls said. "I believe we are the first chamber in any state legislature in America to adopt our own educational curriculum."

The announcement is a departure from the norm. Usually, the state adopts standards and leaves the creation of curriculum and materials up to districts.

It is unclear which lawmakers and which teachers have helped develop the House's curriculum. It is awaiting approval from the Florida Department of Education. A spokesperson for the House did not immediately respond to requests seeking comment.

A copy of the draft curriculum has also not been made available to the public yet.

FloridaStateoftheState (1).JPGDemocratic members remain sitting as Republicans stand and applaud while Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis addresses a joint session of the Legislature, Tuesday, Jan. 11, 2022, in Tallahassee, Fla.

Democrats respond

Democrats in the House and Senate countered Republican leaders' agenda by focusing on pocketbook issues and empowering local officials and working families instead of "the rich and connected."

"Florida Republicans have been running this show for 20 years but where has it gotten us? Out-of-touch policies focused on culture wars and not the real issues facing real Floridians," said Senate Minority Leader Lauren Book, of Plantation.

Public policy or culture war: Will Legislature address Florida's critical needs?

House Minority Leader Evan Jenne, a Dania Beach Democrat, said the Legislature should be focused on addressing the rising cost of rent and homeowner's insurance and helping unemployed Floridians who need assistance.

"We need to stop giving away Florida's tax dollars to rich corporations," Jenne said. "These dollars came from you, hardworking Floridians, and they should be used to rebuild infrastructure and grow the state, not pad the wallets of billionaires."

Democrats have criticized DeSantis' approach to government, accusing him of trying to bolster his ranking in public opinion polls, particularly with his base, by pushing for efforts aimed at restricting public health protections such as ***mask*** and ***vaccine*** requirements.

"In reality, he abdicated his responsibilities and left it to the local governments," said Rep. Fentrice Driskell, a Tampa Democrat. "And so the mayors and county commissioners had to be the grown-ups in the room and make the tough calls to help keep us safe, and to help ensure that freedom that Gov. DeSantis likes to talk about so much."

Tampa Bay Times reporters Romy Ellenbogen and Kirby Wilson contributed to this report.

FloridaStateoftheState (2).JPGCasey DeSantis, center, wife of Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, acknowledges applause after being recognized by him during a legislative session, Tuesday, Jan. 11, 2022, in Tallahassee, Fla.

**Load-Date:** January 11, 2022

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Public policy or culture war: Will Legislature address Florida's critical needs?*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64GW-NHW1-DYJM-M555-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

January 9, 2022 Sunday

Copyright 2022 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** state\_politics

**Length:** 3757 words

**Byline:**  Mary Ellen Klas and Ana Ceballos

Miami Herald

**Dateline:** TALLAHASSEE

**Body**

On Nov. 7, Melinda Jackson's landlord told her she was ending the lease on the three-bedroom home in a quiet suburban neighborhood of Sarasota that Jackson had rented for seven years, forcing her to move by Jan. 5 so the landlord could sell.

Jackson, a 56-year-old single medical assistant who makes $16 an hour, frantically started filling out rental applications and paying application fees, only to be told repeatedly she had been put on a waiting list.

As panic started to set in, Jackson turned to the online neighborhood app, Nextdoor, with a call for help. "Time is running out and I still can't find a place to live,'' she wrote. "...If anyone knows of anything coming up in early January (moving during the holidays can you imagine) please, please let me know."

The post touched a nerve. But instead of getting ideas for a place to rent, she got more than 400 responses, mostly from people in the same situation. There were young and old families, people caring for sick relatives, teachers, police officers, and medical assistants like herself.

"This is the new face of homelessness," Jackson said in an interview a week before her move-out date. "They are not drug addicts or have mental health issues. These are everyday, hard-working families that can't find affordable housing."

Medical assistant faced possibility of homelessness due to lack of affordable housingMelinda Jackson, a medical assistant, was faced with the possibility of homelessness when her landlady told her that she would not renew her lease. She could find nothing affordable, but finally an elderly woman reached out and offered her a room.

As Florida legislators convene their annual legislative session on Tuesday, Jackson's dilemma highlights the disconnect between politics and reality in Florida.

There is no legislation drafted to address the state's growing housing crisis. Gov. Ron DeSantis has proposed putting more money into existing affordable housing programs, which experts say are mostly geared to helping homeowners more than tenants whose rents have risen a record 30% in some parts of Florida.

The Republican governor is seeking reelection in 2022, and critics say he has directed his priorities elsewhere -- to a range of emotionally charged cultural issues that he has highlighted in a series of news conferences with legislative leaders.

DeSantis has announced proposals to create a new state office to police elections, build a new state guard to augment the National Guard, and spend Florida resources on moving "unauthorized aliens" out of the state.

He wants to give parents the right to sue school districts if they teach what's known as "critical race theory," a 1980s legal concept that holds racial disparities are systemic in the United States, and he wants to give employees the ability to sue employers who engage in "diversity training."

"What we're seeing with 'wokeness' is an attempt to delegitimize our institutions and our history,'' DeSantis said at a December news conference announcing his Stop the Wrongs to Our Kids and Employees Act (Stop W.O.K.E. Act). "...When you hear 'equity' used, that is just an ability for people to smuggle in their ideology because we don't need to have those terms."

The proposals also call for schools to teach about "the evils of communism and totalitarian ideologies" and allow college students to record lectures, with a professor's permission, to possibly use as evidence in complaints about political bias to the university.

Legislators from both parties see the governor's agenda as intended to stoke interest from a national audience as DeSantis flirts with the idea of a potential run for president in 2024. Following each of these announcements, the governor's campaign fundraising team sent pitches to followers and supporters, hoping to generate contributions.

"I fully expect this to be a red meat year, where a vast majority of the governor's priorities are focused on securing the base -- not the state base, but the national base," said Sen. Jeff Brandes, a St. Petersburg Republican who will retire this year because of term limits.

Election year overshadows session

While previous governors have had to cajole and muscle lawmakers to influence the 60-day legislative session, DeSantis' national profile and the rare convergence of so many elections for state office happening this year have Republican lawmakers taking their cue from him more than ever.

Not only is 2022 a midterm election year, in which the governor and three independently elected members of the Cabinet are up for reelection, it is also a redistricting year in which the political boundaries of all 120 state House districts and all 40 state Senate districts will change.

"Most legislators are just planning to draft behind the top of the ticket,'' Brandes said. So if lawmakers can help DeSantis achieve his goals, they expect him to "help them win their primary, especially as redistricting approaches and they may be drawn into districts against one another."

Brandes predicts legislators won't tackle the complex housing crisis this session because "it's not a vote-driving issue -- yet."

But Florida's budget is fortified for the second year with billions of dollars in federal pandemic relief money, and legislators have nearly $100 billion to spend.

DeSantis is proposing spending $355 million in existing affordable housing programs, which could mean the largest amount spent on the issue in more than a decade. But the governor has not embraced giving local governments more flexibility and the ability to offer more rent relief, as some legislators want.

Similar questions have been raised about other emerging crises in property and auto insurance, and industry labor shortages. As the 60-day legislative session gets set to begin, lawmakers have yet to propose legislation to tackle those issues.

Legislative leaders, who like the governor have refrained from doing individual interviews, have not outlined their session priorities.

Some bills have already been passed by committees, a sign they are on the leadership agenda. Among them, a proposal sponsored by Sen. Joe Gruters, the head of the Florida Republican Party and a Sarasota Republican, which would make school board elections partisan.

With 3 vacant South Florida seats, Democrats start 2022 session in even weaker posture

National playbook

So why the focus on emotionally charged cultural issues over pocketbook issues in a pivotal election year?

Social scientists who study culture wars say that driving votes on Election Day is always a motivating factor for legislatures, and DeSantis and GOP leaders are simply following the national playbook by exploiting divisions exacerbated by the pandemic.

"Even if the governor of Florida were not so visibly positioning himself for national office, he would still probably be doing what he's doing and so would the Republican Party in Florida," said William Galston, a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution who writes a weekly politics column for The Wall Street Journal.

Unlike complex economic policies that appeal to just portions of the electorate, cultural issues often "are both broader and potentially more intense and so Republican operatives, I think for good reason, have been drawn to this expanding agenda of social issues as a high ground to fight the battles on,'' he said.

Last year, Republican legislators sparred with Democrats over transgender athletes, "anti-riot" legislation, ***COVID*** lockdowns, and ***vaccine*** mandates. This year, they are teeing up contentious issues of school board control, critical race theory, voter fraud, "wokeness" in state institutions and illegal immigration.

Galston said he believes that the GOP agenda in Florida is designed to expand the Republican base by tapping into anxieties about schools and the labor market brought on by the pandemic.

The message from Republicans is that liberal elites are using their influence to impose ideologies on their families in schools, while stepping on individual liberties with ***mask*** and ***vaccine*** mandates.

"With a lot of kids being out of school or needing more help from home, parents have gotten much deeper involved in what their students are learning and how it's being presented and shaped,'' said Sen. Dennis Baxley, R-Ocala. "It is an awareness that the 'awoke' movement has elements to it that are very detrimental to the America that we know, and we want them to have skills rather than indoctrination."

For example, he said, when people talk about "equity, they're really talking about distribution of resources" and redistribution of wealth and, "underlying this is the history of socialism and communist countries."

For that reason, Baxley said, "anything that is a concern of the governor will definitely be in discussion and the Legislature is to be responsive to what he's highlighting."

The counterpoint from Democrats is that Republicans are ignoring a shrinking safety net for working Floridians while the governor's focus on critical race theory -- an issue Florida's schools say they don't teach -- and animosity over diversity training in the workplace aggravates existing racial tensions and wastes taxpayer money.

"Not only is what the governor proposing fake and ridiculous, it will cause racial division and is antithetical to everything that the Republicans have ever stood for -- allowing private lawsuits against the school district and then not allowing companies their diversity training,'' said Sen. Tina Polsky, a Boca Raton Democrat and employment lawyer. "It's insane to me."

Senate Education Committee Vice Chair Shevrin Jones, a West Park Democrat, says he considers the debate an attempt by Republicans to "whitewash" history.

"Unless Republicans believe that Black folks were never called n----r or colored, or unless they believe that segregation never happened, then maybe they are on the right track in believing that they are right,'' he said in an interview.

Theda Skocpol, a Harvard sociologist and political scientist who has studied American conservatism, questions how many Floridians are actually concerned that critical race theory is being taught in schools. She wonders if that issue, and the move to politicize school board elections, "may be more of a placeholder" for parents' anxiety about the impact the pandemic has had on children and their educational progress -- issues that emerged in the gubernatorial election of Republican Glenn Youngkin in Virginia.

"Right now, it's pretty clear, especially in the wake of Virginia, Republicans see school board politics as something that they can use to recruit local activists and to win back suburban women,'' many of whom had switched to Biden in 2020, she said in an interview.

Skocpol said that the pandemic also has left more people isolated and dependent on television and social media and therefore vulnerable to "the possibilities of creating emotional, angry controversies over nothing."

"Florida has a disproportionately older electorate, so any appeal that these kinds of cultural war issues have is exaggerated because you're dealing with a population that spends a lot of time watching Fox and other right-wing media,'' she said.

LawEnforcementFlorida (1).JPGState Sen. Shevrin D. Jones, D-West Park, speaks during a legislative session, Thursday, April 29, 2021, at the Capitol in Tallahassee, Fla.

Few surprises and few details

Many Republicans say the governor's priorities are nothing new and see it as DeSantis "doubling down" on measures that he has promoted since he first came into office in 2019.

"You know where he stands all the time," said Sen. Travis Hutson, a St. Augustine Republican. "I've never been blindsided or thrown a curveball by this governor, ever."

But Hutson says the governor also understands that there is a legislative process and is "flexible" with leaving state lawmakers to deal with the details.

"So, while he may have big, bold ideas, he knows that we have to massage those ideas into something that's plausible that we can all live with," he said.

It is unclear whether legislators will water down the governor's proposals, as they have done with other initiatives, such as his plan to ban ***vaccine*** mandates and require employers to use E-Verify, the federal electronic system, to check the immigration status of workers.

As a gubernatorial candidate in 2018, DeSantis vowed to require all employers in the state to use the system. But in 2020, legislators passed a measure that fell short of that promise by only requiring public employers and private contractors to use the system, which is run by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

This year, DeSantis wants to strengthen E-Verify enforcement, but he has yet to unveil the details of the proposal. He also has yet to elaborate on details about his plans to allow parents and employers to sue over what he calls "wokeness" policies.

The delay bothers Rep. Anthony Sabatini, a Howey-in-the-Hills Republican who has been a vocal critic of the "fake E-Verify" measure passed by the Legislature in 2020.

"The longer that we wait to get these bills, the worse off we are because it allows the legislative leadership to conduct more shenanigans and do Orwellian speech where they say the bill does one thing, but it doesn't," Sabatini said.

While Sabatini agrees with DeSantis on policy, he says he is not a fan of the governor's approach, which lately features campaign-style news conferences, and bullet points but no specifics. Without details, Sabatini said, it is difficult to mobilize the public to pressure lawmakers into making changes.

Even so, social scientists and policy advocates say the emotionally charged debates succeed in creating energy around an issue, along with more division and partisanship.

"What we're losing is the possibility of a conversation that lays the basis for a reasonable agreement across party lines,'' Galston said.

"It's just so sad to see these culture wars play out in politics because it actually doesn't do anything to help keep Floridians healthier, more prosperous or safe," said Rep. Fentrice Driskell, a Tampa Democrat, in an interview.

Legislative leaders so far have not advanced bills to make more extreme changes on other often contentious issues. Although the governor indicated he would sign a bill to allow people to carry a firearm without a license, a measure Sabatini has filed, the bill has yet to have a hearing. A House bill, patterned after the Texas law that would ban abortions as early as about six weeks, has been filed by Rep. Webster Barnaby, a Deltona Republican, but has not received a hearing.

No affordable housing plan

For Brandes, the decision by the governor and legislative leaders to focus on cultural conflicts delays the inevitable need to craft substantial policy that addresses other important issues facing Floridians.

"The simple truth is in this state there isn't a plan to deal with affordable housing in Florida,'' he said.

Because some people can't afford a down payment for a home, and can't pay their first and last month's rent, they resort to living in motels or hotels, he said. Brandes has filed legislation that would give local governments more control over what he calls the state's one-size-fits-all approach to affordable housing by shifting the money from down payment assistance to rental assistance.

Rep. Carlos Guillermo Smith, an Orlando Democrat, and Sen. Gary Farmer, a Fort Lauderdale Democrat, last month asked DeSantis to declare an affordable housing emergency in Florida in an effort to end what they consider price gouging by landlords that have raised rents by up to 30% in parts of the state.

DeSantis blamed the rise in housing costs on the national economy and responded that the Democrats should direct their criticism to President Joe Biden.

Brandes also notes that there isn't a plan to deal with soaring property insurance rates, auto insurance reform, and the burgeoning labor shortages in nursing, transportation infrastructure, and the prison system.

"We have to have a strategy for dealing with this, and I have yet to see it,'' he said.

Miami-Dade Mayor Levine Cava rolls out new Office of Equity and InclusionMiami-Dade County Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** announces the launch of Miami-Dade's first Office of Equity and Inclusion during a press conference at the Hampton House in Miami on Wednesday, February 10, 2021.

Next crisis: Property insurance

Sen. Jim Boyd, R-Bradenton, chair of the Senate's Banking and Insurance Committee, acknowledged that the property insurance market in Florida is in "crisis."

Some insurers have requested permission to raise premiums on homeowners by more than 30%. Citizens Property Insurance, the state-run insurer for homeowners who can't find policies on the private market, is looking to raise rates by 11%, the maximum allowed under state law, and multiple property insurers have fallen into receivership in the last two years.

But Boyd, whose own homeowner's insurance policy has gone up 40%, said he does not expect a robust bill to address rising rates this session, choosing instead to wait and see how reforms passed during the 2021 session play out.

That legislation, signed by DeSantis, included limiting the fees attorneys collect when homeowners sue their insurers and reducing the amount of time homeowners have to file a claim from three years to two. The changes also included allowing Citizens to raise its rates beyond 10%.

One portion of the legislation, which limited advertisements by roofing contractors, was placed on hold by a federal judge following a lawsuit last year. Boyd said he will try to address contractor advertising and the cost of roof replacements, issues that insurers have said are contributing to rising rates.

"I think we have to try to do something to give [homeowners] some relief," he said.

DeSantis' priorities also contrast him with Biden, as the governor continues to generate buzz about a potential 2024 White House run.

"DeSantis is a master at giving a counterpoint and an alternative to what's happening at the national level," Sabatini said. "He is highlighting the trends, but no matter what he does, the trends themselves are going to make people push really hard for a different direction."

But is an agenda focused on social issues what constituents are telling legislators they want?

"When I talk to my constituents, they are worried about jobs. They're worried about the economy. They're worried about their kids and their education deficits from switching from in-person to out-of-school education,'' said Sen. Jennifer Bradley, a Fleming Island Republican who chairs the Senate Community Affairs Committee.

In November, Bradley's committee held a workshop on the status of affordable housing in Florida and was told that most workers in Florida can't afford to rent a typical two-bedroom apartment as incomes were not keeping pace with housing costs.

Bradley said the workshop made clear that "state investment is an important part of the solution but by no means the only part" and, she added, her committee "will also consider initiatives to address financing and local government flexibility to support and implement policy."

Tina Polsky\_fitted.jpegFlorida state Sen. Tina Polsky, D-Boca Raton.

Polsky -- a Boca Raton Democrat who represents Parkland, Coral Springs and Coconut Creek -- said her constituents want legislators to put a priority on gun safety, especially at a time when students continue to bring guns into schools.

For four years, Polsky has proposed a bill that requires safe storage of guns, but it has not received a hearing.

"The fact that we won't address something that is this day-to-day scary for parents and schools but we are going to spend days on these culture wars is beyond me," she said. "One is real and one is fake."

Polsky recalled her conversation with a leader from the Service Employees International Union, which represents bus drivers, adjunct professors, nurses, certified nursing assistants in nursing homes, janitors, and home healthcare aides, who told her their members "are desperate for affordable housing and desperate for higher wages."

"Real life people who can't make ends meet have to go to work sick because they can't afford to not work because of rent,'' she said.

Jackson finds a residence

Jackson, the Sarasota medical assistant whose lease was canceled, is confused by what she considers the state's inadequate response to the housing crisis.

"They have been acknowledging this [affordable housing] was a problem for the last few years, so that's what I don't understand,'' she said. "This is not like it happened overnight. It's gotten gradually worse."

After weeks of searching, Jackson in December was left with two options: rent a single room from an 88-year-old woman outside of the city, or move in with a single man who she didn't know in the city. She decided to move in with the older woman who will charge her $750 a month, and Jackson will make a lengthy commute.

melinda digital copy.jpg01/03/22--Melinda Jackson, a medical assistant, was faced with the possibility of homelessness when her landlady notified her that she had two months to find housing. She could find nothing affordable in the area, but finally an elderly woman reached out and offered her a room for rent. Though not her preferred option for housing, Jackson was grateful to find a safe place to live.

"It's scary. This is new for me, but I have no choice'' she said. "I'm lucky it's just me and my cat. But I'm hearing stories -- such as families being displaced with children, families that have elderly parents who live with them and they have nowhere to go. And it breaks my heart."

She worries that if something drastic isn't done, Florida's affordable housing crisis will become a homelessness crisis that will have ripple effects on businesses like her employer, West Coast Podiatry Center, which has been short-staffed since the pandemic.

"We literally searched high and low for employees -- offering more money, offering more benefits,'' she said. "The thing is, there's plenty of jobs but there's nowhere for the people to live to fill those positions."

When she hears the list of cultural issues that are a priority of the Legislature, Jackson pauses.

"All those topics I agree are very important,'' she said. "It seems like we just talk about the same thing over and over, but in reality is anything ever being done?"

Tampa Bay Times reporters Lawrence Mower and Kirby Wilson contributed to this report.

Mary Ellen Klas can be reached at [*meklas@miamiherald.com*](mailto:meklas@miamiherald.com) and @MaryEllenKlas

**Load-Date:** January 9, 2022

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Behold Florida Sen. Marco Rubio's wacky COVID-19 stances. They're dangerous, Miami | Opinion*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64G1-S1Y1-DYJM-M2R6-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

January 5, 2022 Wednesday

Copyright 2022 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** fabiola\_santiago

**Length:** 1169 words

**Byline:**  Fabiola Santiago

Miami Herald

**Body**

Where's David Letterman when you need him?

Florida Republican Sen. Marco Rubio deserves his own Top Ten List of ***COVID*** Falsehoods.

His hometown, Miami, continues to be the state's epicenter of the raging coronavirus pandemic, this time around more contagious in its latest incarnation, omicron, a variant named after the 15th letter of the Greek alphabet.

Almost two years in, most of us -- and especially so elected officials -- ought to be pros at promoting best practices for how to help the public stay safe or, at least, as safe as possible.

Yet, the record numbers of infected, the hospitalized on the rise and people still dying mean nothing to the senator, who is better suited for Republican foreign-policy talking points than dispensing on-the-fly silly, dismissive -- and dangerous -- public-health information.

Rubio is so out of his league on the subject of ***COVID***-19 that he keeps striking the wrong chord at the worst time, and in the most public way -- via his favorite soap box, Twitter. It's as if he were doing it on purpose for the sake of the spectacle.

Just when you think he couldn't possibly go there, the senator becomes an even worse caricature of himself.

Gov. Ron DeSantis wants more monoclonal antibodies from the federal governmentWith new ***COVID*** cases reaching record levels in Florida due to omicron variant, Gov. Ron DeSantis wants between 30,000 and 40,000 more doses of monoclonal antibody treatments sent to Florida.

Infection is preventable, Senator

On Tuesday, when news of the death of a prominent 46-year-old anti-***vaccine*** (all vaccines) California lawyer from ***COVID*** was trending, Rubio tweeted this:

"We have a record number of cases because Omicron INFECTION is virtually unpreventable. But we have solid evidence that Omicron ILLNESS is far less severe," he said.

Florida Senator Marco Rubio tweet on omicron infection on Jan. 4

That omicron infection is "virtually unpreventable" is patently and malignantly false. We have infections because people aren't wearing masks. And although this new variant infects even the vaccinated, the symptoms have been less severe, knocking the legs out from under anti-vaxxers' ridiculous argument that vaccines don't work.

Omicron is more easily transmitted, which makes it so dangerous. But Rubio is cherry-picking half truths. He makes the situation seem hopeless, that there's nothing that can be done. He's spreading dangerous information that could cost the lives of the unvaccinated, who are more vulnerable to the disease.

"It's time to get back to normal & learn to coexist with an endemic virus by managing risk & mitigating harm," Rubio goes on to say, never bothering to tell people that vaccination and wearing a ***mask*** are the best ways to mitigate harm.

As to whether this is an endemic virus, that remains to be seen. We don't know what will happen in three months. Maybe the coronavirus will become endemic like the flu, but medical experts aren't even going there yet.

Instead, they're desperately sifting through scientific data and begging states like Florida to be more transparent with theirs because it is vital to assessing everything from risk and probability to treatment.

"This calls for a little bit of prudence interpreting scientific data," a Miami-based ***COVID*** expert tells me. "We don't know what may happen in three months. When it comes to cherry-picking data, the in-your-face-problem is data changing daily. ... Uncertainty shapes new science."

The expert points to monoclonal treatments that Gov. Ron DeSantis keeps plugging despite the fact that "evidence is sketchy" and they don't work very well.

"The most dramatic development is vaccines that work," he said. "To suggest otherwise is a sad and cruel deception. If everyone had worn a ***mask*** when we said, 'Wear a ***mask***,' if everyone had vaccinated, we'd have a lot less dead people."

What Rubio is saying isn't based on good science and, certainly, isn't good public policy.

But he keeps embarrassing himself with quips like: "Record numbers testing positive for a sore throat isn't a crisis," minimizing ***COVID*** and demeaning the suffering of people.

Not only that of the infected, but of other patients indirectly, and suddenly again, affected by changes in visitation policy at hospitals, rehabilitation centers, and nursing homes to prevent spread. People who feel lonely and isolated without family members at their bedside once more.

Rubio also turns a blind eye to the havoc omicron is creating at depleted workplaces like government, schools, and health care services due to staff shortages because of infection and the need to quarantine people who come in contact with the ***COVID***-infected.

Sure, no crisis at all.

But ask Florida fire fighters working round-the-clock, 72-hour shifts.

Last lesson of 2021, Florida: Omicron happens when we act selfishly, like Gov. DeSantis | Opinion

***COVID*** hospitalizations on rise

With Florida breaking ***COVID*** infection records by stunning numbers, Rubio tweeted on Jan. 3 this stream of consciousness, no periods. My annotations are in brackets.

"There is no Omicron hospital 'surge' in Florida [false, say medical personnel living again through the exhaustion of being care providers]

"People admitted for non-***COVID*** reasons get tested [true, of course they should; don't you think their healthcare workers deserve to know this?]

"If they test positive, they get counted as a "***COVID*** patient" [and why not?]

"The majority of the 5,400 "***COVID*** patients" in #Florida are in the hospital for non-***COVID*** reasons" [The point being? Maybe you broke a bone, come to the hospital with ***COVID***, develop pneumonia from it and die.]

***COVID*** can become the more important thing you are in the hospital for.

It's as if Rubio is purposefully twisting information to confuse and push the Republican argument that everything is going swell in Florida, that the DeSantis-led GOP cadre has the pandemic under control when, in fact, they know they don't.

And we do, too.

But guess who doesn't?

The people listening to Rubio and DeSantis-influenced nonsense on Cuban radio in Miami.

The people listening to conservative radio in red Florida.

The people who aren't listening to any media, but soak up prevailing falsehoods.

If the management of ***COVID*** in this state were going as smoothly as Rubio and DeSantis want us to believe, why is the state withholding information and deceiving us about the data? Why can't the Department of Health show statistics about who getting ***COVID*** is vaccinated and who isn't?

No one is asking for patient names, simply numbers. This is particularly perverse.

Truth is, a public official of Rubio's rank spreading misleading and false information makes us all less safe -- not just from ***COVID***, but from everything.

***Daniella Levine Cava*** about DeSantis: 'He won't even tell us if he's been boosted'Miami-Dade County Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** talked about Gov. Ron DeSantis' handling of the omicron crisis in the state during a press conference on Jan. 4, 2022, in which she endorsed Florida State Senator Annette Taddeo for Governor of Florida.

**Load-Date:** January 10, 2022

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Omicron delivers tough day of Florida record cases, cruise warnings, kids hospitalized*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64DW-Y0N1-DYJM-M0GD-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

December 30, 2021 Thursday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** coronavirus

**Length:** 1763 words

**Byline:**  Devoun Cetoute, Douglas Hanks and Daniel Chang

Miami Herald

**Body**

Surging ***COVID***-19 cases in Florida and the United States delivered another tough day of record infections and travel disruptions for millions of Americans preparing to ring in the new year as the highly contagious omicron variant continued to sweep across the nation and the globe with breathtaking speed.

The daily average number of new cases in the United States on Wednesday was more than 300,000, surpassing the previous peak set in January, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. In Florida, health officials reported 77,848 additional ***COVID***-19 cases, and 90 more deaths on Thursday, reflecting a multi-day case count from the CDC backlogging cases and deaths, according to Miami Herald calculations of CDC data.

The rapid spread of infections, though causing mild to moderate disease in the majority of hospital cases, threatened to overwhelm emergency rooms as more people visit them seeking testing and treatment -- even as overall hospitalizations remained "comparatively low," according to the CDC.

CDC warns travelers to avoid cruises

Disruptions extended to airlines, with more than 1,100 flights canceled due to ***COVID*** absenteeism among workers, and cruises, a major South Florida industry, as the CDC raised warning levels for cruise ships and advised Americans to avoid them "regardless of vaccination status."

The warning comes after cruise ships sailing in U.S. waters reported 5,013 ***COVID*** cases to the CDC between Dec. 15 and Dec. 29, the federal health agency said. By contrast, cruise lines reported only 162 cases to the agency between Nov. 30 and Dec. 14, the CDC said.

At least three cruise ships -- two operated by Royal Caribbean and one by Carnival Cruise Line -- that sailed from Fort Lauderdale or Miami since Dec. 18 have experienced ***COVID***-19 outbreaks among passengers and crew.

"The virus that causes ***COVID***-19 spreads easily between people in close quarters on board ships, and the chance of getting ***COVID***-19 on cruise ships is very high, even if you are fully vaccinated and have received a ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** booster dose," the CDC said in its guidelines updated on Dec. 30.

The federal health agency raised its ***COVID***-19 Travel Health Notice level for cruise travel from a Level 3 to a Level 4, which the agency described as the "highest level."

US-NEWS-CORONAVIRUS-CRUISE-1-FLThe Odyssey of the Seas cruise ship arrives at Port Everglades in Fort Lauderdale on Sunday, Dec. 26, 2021. The Royal Caribbean ship returned to Fort Lauderdale after numerous crew members and passengers tested positive for ***COVID***-19 and the ship was denied entry at two ports.

History Miami, the county-funded museum in downtown Miami, announced it will close through Jan. 10 as ***COVID*** infections spike across Miami-Dade. Director Jorge Zamanillo said the nonprofit has enough staff to operate -- its downtown buildings were open Thursday -- but that he wanted to shut down before ***COVID***'s spread left him no choice.

"We've had a few people with ***COVID***, and some people are quarantining," he said. "Right now, it's more of a precaution before things get out of control."

Miami, Broward expanding testing, at-home kits

In response to the surge in cases and the soaring demand for tests, local governments in Miami-Dade and Broward have expanded testing hours and sites, and handed out tens of thousands of free at-home tests that were snapped up in hours.

Miami-Dade officials plan to hand out about 75,000 ***COVID***-19 home tests on Friday at eight libraries, repeating a giveaway that saw high demand over the last week for the more than 150,000 testing kits the county began handing out over the holiday weekend.

MIA\_04LIBRARYCOVIDTESTFree take-home ***COVID***-19 tests are handed out by Edison Center Branch employees on Monday, Dec. 27, 2021. Miami-Dade County officials will be handing out about 75,000 ***COVID*** home tests on Friday at eight libraries.

The state-supplied tests will be given away starting at 7:30 a.m., with a limit of two tests per household, according to a county press release.

"Our team is working around the clock to meet the enormous increase in demand and keep residents safe by making tests as accessible as possible, including by distributing hundreds of thousands of take-home rapid test kits and opening new testing sites this week," said Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava***. "We're grateful to all those across Miami-Dade taking the simple precautions that we know work to keep us safe."

The libraries announced as Friday's distribution centers are:

Kendale Lakes Branch Library: 15205 SW 88 St., Miami

Naranja Branch Library: 14850 SW 280 St., Miami

North Dade Regional Library: 2455 NW 183 St., Miami Gardens

Northeast Dade-Aventura Branch: 2930 Aventura Blvd., Aventura

Main Library: 101 W. Flagler St., Miami

Miami Beach Regional Library: 227 22nd St., Miami Beach

Miami Lakes Branch Library: 6699 Windmill Gate Rd., Miami Lakes

Westchester Regional Library: 9445 Coral Way, Miami

Broward also announced that the county will open new ***COVID***-19 testing sites in January to help meet a surge of demand that has left people stuck in lines for hours and at-home test kits sold out in many stores.

The new test sites will be at Mullins Park in Coral Springs, Lauderhill Sports Park in Lauderhill, Tree Tops Park in Davie, Tradewinds Park in Coconut Creek and Central Broward Park & Broward County Stadium in Lauderhill. At least four of the sites previously served as testing or vaccination sites.

Remote learning at UM at semester start

Amid the rise in ***COVID*** cases in South Florida, the University of Miami announced Wednesday evening it will start the spring semester with remote-only classes for the first two weeks. Classes will start on Tuesday, Jan. 18, as scheduled, but students will not be attending courses in classrooms at either the Coral Gables or Marine campuses.

UM's decision to pivot to remote learning at the start of the semester follows a trend unfolding at many colleges as administrators and faculty contend with surging ***COVID*** cases and a loosening of safety protocols, such as ***mask*** mandates.

IMG\_0343.jpgThe University of Miami announced on Dec. 29, 2021, that classes would begin remotely at the start of the spring 2022 semester due to the rising number of ***COVID*** cases in Florida and across the country.

But as universities across Florida prepare to welcome back thousands of students from around the world in a few weeks, not all institutions are responding the same way.

In Gainesville, the University of Florida, despite protests from faculty, is scheduled to start classes in person next week. University union leaders have requested classes to begin remotely in light of the recent surge in ***COVID*** cases.

On Monday, Dec. 27, state university system Board of Governors Chairman Syd Kitson and system Chancellor Marshall Criser sent out an email to the 12 schools within their system emphasizing ***mask*** wearing and vaccination.

"It is clear the pandemic is not over, and as we prepare for the spring semester, we must also remain vigilant and follow the policies and protocols that are shown to limit the impacts of the virus," reads the letter.

The letter from the Board of Governors also emphasized a return to in-class education.

Record kids' ***COVID*** cases

Florida's large increase in ***COVID*** cases comes from the CDC backlogging cases and deaths for the state on Mondays and Thursdays, when multiple days in the past have their totals changed.

In August, Florida began reporting cases by the "case date" rather than the date the case was logged into the system, resulting in a number of cases back-filling over time. All but 59 of the newly reported cases -- about 99.9% -- occurred since Dec. 2, according to a Miami Herald analysis.

In all, Florida has recorded at least 4,090,000 confirmed ***COVID*** cases and 62,480 deaths., surpassing 4 million cumulative ***COVID*** cases this week.

In the past seven days, as the omicron version of the virus has circulated, the state has added 19 deaths and 36,781 cases per day on average, according to Herald calculations. That rolling seven-day case average is the highest it's ever been.

Florida hospitals also continued to report an increase in the number of inpatients with ***COVID***-19, with a total of 4,433 people hospitalized with the disease on Thursday, according to hospital capacity data from the Department of Health & Human Services. ***COVID***-19 patients filled about 8% of all inpatient beds in Florida.

Few of those inpatients are severely ill or progressing to the intensive care unit, and many are finding out that they're positive for ***COVID***-19 after being admitted to the hospital for other medical reasons, such as appendicitis or a broken bone, doctors say.

Yet despite what appears to be less severe illness, there has been a crush of pediatric patients at emergency rooms, accompanied by parents who want their children to be screened for ***COVID***-19. The demand is stretching hospitals thin and leading physicians to plead with the community to stop going to the ER to get tested.

"It's actually not a place you want to come right now just to have a test if you don't need medical care," said Dr. Ron Ford, chief medical officer for Joe DiMaggio Children's Hospital, which is part of the Memorial Healthcare System, in Hollywood.

Even with fewer severely ill patients with ***COVID***-19, hospital administrators emphasize that they still have to take extra precautions to prevent the disease from spreading to others.

Infection control protocols typically require ***COVID***-positive patients to be held in negative pressure rooms that prevent the airborne virus from leaving an area. And healthcare workers, whose ranks are increasingly getting infected, too, must don more protective gear when caring for infected patients.

MIA\_01CHILDRENHOSPITAL\_CPJNicklaus Children's Hospital emergency entrance. The Miami hospital is seeing a crush of children showing up at their emergency room and urgent care centers with ***COVID***, although cases are relatively mild.

Dr. Marcos Mestre, chief medical officer for Nicklaus Children's Hospital in Miami, said the number of ***COVID***-positive patients visits seen in the emergency room and urgent care centers was at an all-time high this week. Most of those patients were sent home because they were not sick enough to be admitted to the hospital.

"It's definitely a milder case," he said, referring to the omicron variant, "but what makes it a little more difficult to handle is the sheer volume of cases."

Miami Herald staff writers Michelle Marchante, Miami Herald writer Jesse Lieberman and Hayley Fowler of the Charlotte Observer contributed to this report.

**Load-Date:** December 31, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*COVID. Surfside collapse. Haiti unrest. More COVID. Can we get a refund on 2021?*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64DT-7N31-DYJM-M54K-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

December 30, 2021 Thursday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** local

**Length:** 3201 words

**Byline:**  Howard Cohen

Miami Herald

**Body**

Can we get a refund on 2021?

We didn't like 2020, either, for obvious reasons -- cough, ***COVID*** -- but we counted on 2021 being so much better with the arrival of not one but three vaccines to combat the novel coronavirus.

Many lined up for shots of Pfizer, Moderna and Johnson & Johnson in ways older folks haven't done since camping out overnight outside Spec's Music to buy concert tickets in the '80s.

We were going to see shows again.

And we did. Got our Harry Styles tickets for his Capital One Beach Bash at Lummus Park in Miami Beach last week.

Until we learned another letter in the Greek alphabet -- omicron, the name given to the latest variant.

The first case of the new omicron variant of the coronavirus was reported in Miami-Dade on Dec. 10, bringing to three the total of known cases of the latest coronavirus strain in Florida. The other two omicron cases in Florida were confirmed earlier that week in Tampa Bay and St. Lucie County.

And then we didn't need those Styles tickets. The show was canceled, leaving the sound of 2020 echoing in our head. Remember when Styles' pre-Super Bowl concert in late January 2020 under a party tent on Miami's Watson Island got canceled at the last moment thanks to a severe thunderstorm? The cheeky Brit singer is going to develop a complex about South Florida.

***COVID***-19, year two

In April, the Miami Herald took readers "Inside the ***COVID*** Unit." A year after the ***COVID***-19 pandemic pummeled Florida in the spring of 2020, an onslaught of patients threatened to overwhelm South Florida's medical system. Doctors and nurses at Jackson South started recording what happened inside the ***COVID*** unit at Jackson South: "The pain. The determination. The growing realization that this was unlike anything they had ever encountered."

In December, the Miami Herald won two Suncoast Emmy Awards for "Inside the ***COVID*** Unit."

Inside the ***COVID*** Unit: Battling the Coronavirus Pandemic in MiamiJackson South doctors and nurses were filmed for the ***COVID*** documentary. Watch our live discussion to find out what's happened in Miami-Dade since the film's release.

Centner Academy, a private school with campuses in Miami's Design District and Edgewater, put South Florida in the national spotlight when it warned its staff in April against taking vaccines that prevent ***COVID***-19, saying it will not employ anyone who has been inoculated. The announcement, first reported by the New York Times, left some parents, teachers and medical experts "aghast because it was presented as fact without citing any scientific evidence," the Herald reported.

Leila Centner, who co-founded the school with husband David Centner, warned that vaccinated persons "may be transmitting something from their bodies" that could harm others, particularly the "reproductive systems, fertility, and normal growth and development in women and children."

Centner Academy had also required that students who got vaccinated must quarantine at home for 30 days. But the private school walked back that decision in October after the Florida Department of Education threatened to cut its funding if its attendance policy was found to be against the law.

01CENTNERSCHOOL\_CPJ.JPGDavid Centner and wife Lelia Centner, center, greet attendees in August 2019 at the Centner Academy, a pre-K-fifth grade private school they founded with a campus in the Miami Design District and in Edgewater. In April 2021, the school said it would not employ anyone who had been inoculated with the ***vaccine*** that prevents ***COVID***-19.

A Florida woman caught on video coughing on a cancer patient at a Jacksonville Pier 1 store in the early days of the novel coronavirus pandemic in 2020 was sentenced in April by a Duval County Court judge. Debra Hunter was ordered to serve 30 days in jail, pay a $500 fine, serve six months' probation, cover the costs of the victim's ***COVID***-19 test and undergo a mental health evaluation along with anger management, The Associated Press reported.

Customer intentionally coughs on woman inside Pier 1 in FloridaA shopper not wearing a ***mask*** intentionally coughed on another shopper, a brain cancer patient who was filming her arguing with a Pier 1 employee in Jacksonville, Florida.

Florida reported 46,923 new ***COVID*** cases on Dec. 29, the largest single-day increase of ***COVID*** cases since the pandemic began and nearly double the previous peak during the summer, when the deadly delta variant was surging, according to that day's report to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, based on Miami Herald calculations of CDC data. The state also surpassed four million ***COVID*** cases. Dec. 30 brought another record, when the state reported the largest multi-day increase of newly reported cases.

Lines for people seeking ***COVID*** tests once again grew to proportions not seen since the introduction of vaccines, which health experts still say is the best defense against serious consequences of catching the virus. Masks are back on, too, at year's end.

But 2021 wasn't all about ***COVID***.

***COVID*** foils Big Orange's return to New Year's Eve celebration in downtown Miami

Many other things happened in South Florida that makes this such a, well, interesting news town.

Surfside building collapse

CONDO COLLAPSE (35)The search-and-rescue operation after the partial collapse of the Champlain Towers South in Surfside on Thursday, June 24, 2021.

We mourn the 98 lives lost when Surfside's Champlain Towers South collapsed after 1 a.m. on June 24 -- the deadliest catastrophic failure of an occupied residential building in modern U.S. history. And for the families of the victims who ranged in age from 1 to 92. And for the hundreds who lost their homes and lifetimes of keepsakes.

One miracle. Only seven of the 105 people who were inside the section of the building that fell survived. One was Jonah Handler, 15, who was spotted in the rubble. He was caught between his mattress and bed frame. A tourist from Phoenix who just happened to be walking his dog nearby saw Jonah and alerted firefighters and rescue crews that someone had survived the fall.

Jonah's mother, Stacie Fang, 54, with whom he had been sitting in his bedroom just moments earlier inside Unit 1002, did not survive. She died at Aventura Hospital and was the first casualty to be identified.

"He had a guardian angel for sure," Jonah's rescuer, tourist Nicholas Balboa told reporters.

3efb9da2-b080-4aae-b16b-45686b25860\_fitted.jpegStacie Fang with her son, 15-year-old Jonah Handler. Both were pulled alive from the rubble of the Surfside condo collapse. Stacie Fang later died, but Jonah has survived.

What we'll remember: What we lost in the Surfside catastrophe and how it changed us

The Surfside investigation. "Champlain Towers South was poorly designed, even for the 1970s when the plans were originally drawn and codes were less rigorous, according to an analysis of building plans, applicable building codes and photos of the debris performed by the Miami Herald in consultation with four engineers and a general contractor," one of several Miami Herald investigative pieces reported.

Collapse reconstructed: How years of problems converged the night Champlain Towers fell

Another Herald investigation tapped witness accounts, visible damage and a computer model to gain insights into "how a pool deck failure propagated into the catastrophic failure at Champlain Towers."

The last stand of Champlain Towers South. Computer model, witnesses reconstruct the tragedy

Assassination in Haiti, then earthquake

moise.jpgHaiti's President Jovenel Moise had been governing by decree. His critics said that he was an autocrat in the making.

Haitian President Jovenel Moise was assassinated and his wife wounded during an armed attack in the early hours of July 7 at their private residence above the hills of Port-au-Prince. The killing and attack "plunged the Caribbean nation, already in the throes of a political crisis, into fresh uncertainty about its leadership," the Herald reported.

President of Haiti Moise killed in attack at residenceHaitian President Jovenel Moise was killed during an attack on his residence near Port-au-Prince in the early hours of July 7. This video was posted on social media in the wake of the attack. It shows the security response after the attack.

A 7.2 magnitude earthquake in the southwestern peninsula of Haiti on Aug. 14 destroyed houses, schools and businesses, killed at least 2,248 people and injured 12,763 people, according to an OCHA situation report in September. Search-and-rescue efforts in the hardest-hit areas concluded on Sept. 2; but more than 300 Haitians remained missing.

A couple days after the devastating earthquake, Haitian Prime Minister Ariel Henry told the Miami Herald that there was one significant difference between the August 2021 earthquake in Haiti and the January 2010 one that destroyed parts of Haiti's capital, Port-au-Prince.

"It's how the authorities are approaching it," Henry said in an interview shortly after arriving from his second visit in two days to the southern region. "For example, of the aid that is coming, we are making sure that it passes through one door of entry."

"Henry said it's not that the government wants to stifle aid delivery, but it wants to avoid the waste, losses and uneven distributions that haunted both the January 2010 earthquake response and other disaster responses in Haiti," the Herald reported.

Nearly 1,300 confirmed dead in Haiti earthquake as rescue crews fear aftershocks, storms

Pandora Papers investigation

Millions of leaked documents and the biggest journalism partnership in history uncovered financial secrets of 35 current and former world leaders, more than 330 politicians and public officials in more than 91 countries and territories, and a global lineup of fugitives, con artists and murderers, the Herald reported in the Pandora Papers, a December investigative feature.

Among the names: former British Prime Minister Tony Blair, Brazil's economic minister, the King of Jordan, the presidents of Ukraine and Ecuador and the prime minister of the Czech Republic. "The files also detail financial activities of Russian President Vladimir Putin's "unofficial minister of propaganda" and more than 130 billionaires from the United States, Russia, India, Mexico and other nations."

Latin pop music superstar Shakira's name even was linked on the secret documents to offshore assets.

FBI agents killed

FBI agents shot while serving warrant in Broward. At least one dead.At least one FBI agent was shot and killed and others injured while serving a warrant at a Sunrise home on Feb. 2, 2021.

Feb. 2 was the bloodiest day for the FBI since an April 1986 shootout near Suniland Mall in South Miami-Dade that killed two special agents.

In the latest shooting, two veteran agents were shot to death and three others wounded when a gunman opened fire from inside his home as FBI agents attempted to serve a search warrant at an apartment in Sunrise as part of a child-pornography probe.

The murders of agents Daniel Alfin and Laura Schwartzenberger left the FBI reeling.

'Acts of domestic terrorism'

MIA\_04GUNVIOLENCEPRESSER\_CPSurvivors Affected by Violence The Jack Brown III Foundation founder, Leatha Bush, center, embraces Miami-Dade County Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava***, right, during the emotional press conference about the Memorial Day weekend mass shootings. Monday, May 31, at the Fred Taylor Miami-Dade Police Headquarters in Doral.

An early Sunday morning shooting on May 30 that killed two people and left 21 others wounded was likely a dispute between two rival groups over things said in rap songs or social media posts, Alfredo Ramirez III, director of the Miami-Dade County Police Department, told reporters.

The May shooting happened shortly after midnight outside of the El Mula Banquet Hall near the Country Club of Miami. Police say three gunmen armed with semi-automatic rifles got out of a Nissan Pathfinder and fired dozens of bullets into the crowd. The deceased were identified as Desmond Owens and Clayton Dillard III. Both were 26.

Cubans on the island demand the end of dictatorship

Large crowd of people overturn a car in protest in CardenasA crowd of people overturned a car in Cardenas, Matanzas province, in protest against the government, on Sunday, July 11, 2021.

In an unprecedented display of anger and frustration, thousands of Cuban people took to the streets in July in cities and towns across Cuba, including Havana, to call for the end of the decades-old dictatorship and demand food and vaccines, as shortages of basic necessities have reached crisis proportions and ***COVID***-19 cases have soared.

Carvalho to leave Miami

MIA\_102ACarvalho00NEWPPPMiami Dolphins player Brennan Scarlett, at right, joined Miami-Dade Public Schools Superintendent Alberto Carvalho as he greeted students at dismissal time at iPrep Academy in Miami, the school he founded in 2010 and served as principal, on Friday afternoon, Dec. 17, 2021. Carvalho announced on Dec. 9 that he is becoming the new superintendent in L.A. He has been superintendent in Miami since 2008.

'Very emotional moment.' Carvalho on leaving Miami and challenges ahead for school district

In December, Miami-Dade Schools' Superintendent Alberto Carvalho announced he'd be leaving his post here to helm the Los Angeles Unified School District -- the second-largest school district in the country with about 450,000 students. Miami-Dade, the fourth largest, has about 335,000 students enrolled, with almost 75,000 students in charter schools.

"It's a very emotional moment for me," Carvalho told the Herald.

Some Miami school officials resign or retire as Carvalho seeks 'organizational realignment'

UM fires its law school dean

dean varona.JPGUniversity of Miami School of Law Dean Anthony Varona. In an email sent to the UM community on Tuesday, May 25, 2021, UM President Julio Frenk announced he had fired Varona, effective July 1, 2021. UM faculty, alums and students protested the decision. Varona will retain his role as the M. Minnette Massey Professor of Law, Frenk's email said.

University of Miami President Julio Frenk fired UM law school dean Tony Varona in May, setting off outrage among faculty, alums and students.

Supply chain snags, soaring costs

MIA\_02REIMAGINED\_FUTURECOSTShoppers navigate the aisles for Christmas decorations at The Christmas Palace in Hialeah Gardens on Wednesday, Dec. 1, 2021. The Christmas Palace is celebrating its 30th Christmas and the South Florida staple is seeing a surge of demand from customers.

Prices soared in Florida for just about everything: housing, gas, groceries, home repairs. In November, the U.S. government said the consumer price index, which measures the average cost of common goods and services over time, and is the most common measure of inflation, soared 6.2% from October 2020 to October 2021 -- the biggest 12-month jump since 1990, according to The Associated Press.

Supply chain disruptions, particularly in Asia, also contributed to rising costs, said John Quelch, dean of the Miami Herbert Business School at the University of Miami.

What is inflation? The Federal Reserve explains itWhat is inflation? How does the U.S. Federal Reserve consider price changes? David Wilcox, director of Fed's Research and Statistics Division, explains how inflation rate is measured.

When births go terribly wrong

Florida parents whose children are born brain damaged are told that Florida's Birth-Related Neurological Injury Compensation Association (NICA) will provide medical care and money. The Miami Herald and ProPublica examined the record. That help "was often delayed, denied or deficient," the investigation found.

Birth & Betrayal: 'I had to live in her world.'Jasmine Acebo, severely disabled at birth, relied on her mother, Jamie, for her every need. A Florida agency called NICA promised help, and provided some, but Jamie Acebo says she was 'nickel-and-dimed' at every turn.

Bill would build on reforms to program for Florida kids with birth-related brain injuries

Tom Brady and a superyacht

Brady\_Madsummer.pngTampa Bay Buccaneers quarterback Tom Brady and some of his associates on Jeffrey Soffer's Madsummer superyacht after the Super Bowl on Feb. 7.

South Florida real estate mogul Jeffrey Soffer used his superyacht, and his friendship with Tampa Bay Buccaneers quarterback Tom Brady, to get renewed attention from Florida legislators to his long-sought bid for a Miami Beach casino, a Miami Herald subscribers-only exclusive reported in March.

Hurricane season ends, South Florida spared

Drone captures first-ever video inside a Category 4 HurricaneSD 1045, one of a fleet of 'hurricane' Saildrones piloting around the Atlantic Ocean, captured the first-ever footage inside a Category 4 storm (Hurricane Sam) as it raged in the ocean. Scientists hope that the drones will lead to better predictions.

The end of another record-breaking storm season on Nov. 30 had one bright spot for our region: South Florida went unscathed in 2021.

The rest of the country wasn't as lucky. Hurricane Ida's rapidly intensifying major storm winds lashed Louisiana faster than people could evacuate.

Miami broadcast legend dies

16LARRY KING 6\_fitted.jpegOn April 3, 2017, famed talk-show host/TV journalist Larry King returned to Miami to celebrate the 60th anniversary of his broadcasting career. King died Jan. 23, 2021, in Los Angeles.

Larry King, the iconic CNN talk show host whose career in radio and TV broadcasting began in Miami in the late 1950s on AM radio stations WAHR and WIOD and expanded to local TV outlets like CBS4, died on Jan. 23 in Los Angeles at age 87.

In an interview with the Miami Herald in 2017 when in South Florida for the 60th anniversary of his broadcasting career, King offered his own idea for the headline of his obituary: "Headline: Oldest man who ever lived died today." He then offered a naughty quip.

Entertainment came back

Watch 57-year-old swimsuit model get ready for Swim Week in Miami BeachKathy Jacobs, a 57-year-old model dominated the runway at Swim Week in Miami Beach. Jacobs made history last year when, at the age of 56, she became the oldest model to ever grace Sports Illustrated's famed Swim issue.

As ***COVID*** ebbed and surged and ebbed some signs of normalcy reemerged.

At Paraiso Swim Week in July, models tried out the latest in fashion at the Faena Forum in Miami Beach.

Art Basel and Miami Art Week came back to Miami Beach and Miami neighborhoods in November.

Regional theater at popular venues like Actors' Playhouse at the Miracle Theatre and GableStage at the Biltmore Hotel in Coral Gables offered new productions.

MIA\_Jimmy\_Buffett\_Concert\_MJO\_20Jimmy Buffett and his Coral Reefer Band perform during their concert at the iTHINK Financial Amphitheatre in West Palm Beach, Florida, on Thursday, Dec. 9, 2021.

Concerts returned, too, including a major show by hometown favorite Jimmy Buffett and his Coral Reefer Band at the iTHINK Financial Amphitheatre in West Palm Beach in December.

How a lifetime sailing the seas helped Jimmy Buffett find his footing in a pandemic

But now there's omicron, which is putting some shows and sporting events in question again.

Hey, 2022, can you give us a break?

**Load-Date:** December 30, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Thanks to omicron, it's back to pandemic basics in Miami-Dade County | Editorial*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64CG-S5F1-JC3J-X2PB-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

December 24, 2021 Friday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** editorials

**Length:** 393 words

**Byline:**  the MIami Herald Editorial Board

Miami Herald

**Body**

Omicron doesn't care if you're vaccinated or boosted. It still attacks. Once again, it appears a ***mask*** may be solid protection, vaccinated or not, against catching the fast-spreading variant of the coronavirus.

In Miami-Dade and across the country, it omicron is steadily working its way through the immunized populations. Health experts say breakthrough cases have been more common with omicron than with the Delta strain, although illness, when contracted, may not be as severe. If unvaccinated, "the virus is going to find you," top U.S. infectious-disease expert Dr. Anthony Fauci warned this week.

Praise goes to Miami-Dade Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** for recognizing the need for masks to return.

On Wednesday, she held a news conference to announce that masks will again be required in county buildings, bringing back a restriction she put in place during the surge of the Delta variant in July, but had lifted on Nov. 5.

She also announced new public-health protocols and urged residents to take safety precautions against the highly contagious omicron variant. She also urged people to get vaccinated against ***COVID***-19 and to receive booster shots, which research shows are helpful protection against omicron.

She's not alone. Universal Orlando Resort announced that, starting Satuday, it's tightening its ***mask*** policies at parks, hotels and restaurants as the omicron variant spreads and cases rise. Other cities and institutions are likely to follow as year's end approaches.

Levine Cava also suggested families planning Christmas celebrations consider gathering outdoors to prevent infection.

"We have seen this omicron variant rapidly spreading like wildfire," she said.

Levine Cava has started reinstating other county rules that were dropped over the fall when it appeared the Delta variant was easing. For example, the county is back to requiring hospitals to provide daily reports on ***COVID*** patient counts and ICU bed availability. The county is also deploying mobile vaccination trucks and sequencing for variants at county-run testing sites.

Experts are advising people to use double-layered ***mask*** and warning that cloth masks may not be as effective against omicron. Double masking is another option. The best option is to wear close-fitting masks or the always-effective N95 or KN95 surgical masks.

Bottom line: We have to up our ***mask*** game., once again.

**Load-Date:** December 24, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*The Children's Trust: High-quality early learning is more critical than ever*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64C8-T0R1-JC3J-X0XG-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

December 23, 2021 Thursday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** community

**Length:** 973 words

**Byline:**  Rachel Spector

Miami Herald

**Body**

The earliest years of your child's development have consistently been found to be the most critical and the most indicative of their success in school and beyond. Scientific research consistently shows that a child's brain is developing fastest from birth to 2 years old -- the progress made during this time will set their development trajectory later in life. If you are waiting for kindergarten, or even pre-school, to start their learning you could be waiting too long. The good news is you don't have to wait!

Quality early learning facilities provide opportunities for children to develop cognitively, socially and emotionally putting them on an early path to success. On top of the unparalleled benefits quality early-learning opportunities provide for our children, those experiences are just as critical for the overall wellbeing of families. About one-third of those in the labor force are parents with children under age 14, and according to a survey done by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, 40 percent of employers were concerned that some of their workers wouldn't return to work because of worries about child care. Mothers view childcare as even more important than schooling when it comes to their participation in the workforce.

***COVID***-19 and Early Learning

While the pandemic taught us all that early learning educators are as critical to the welfare of our society as other essential workers; it also took a devastating toll on the childcare industry. Of the 675,000 childcare businesses that were open just before the pandemic hit, 60 percent of them closed at the height of the ***stay-at-home*** orders, threatening to permanently eliminate 4.5 million childcare slots across the country.

On the positive side, Florida's childcare industry has significantly rebounded since the darkest days of the pandemic although challenges still remain. Access to publicly funded preschool programs has increased in recent years, but only 44% of children 4 or younger and 17% of those 3 or younger are enrolled in state pre-kindergarten, Head Start or other programs, according to the National Institute for Early Education Research. Also of concern: Only 18% of children from low-income families -- those who often start kindergarten behind their peers and stand to benefit the most from early education -- are enrolled in pre-kindergarten programs, and of those who are enrolled, many are in lower-quality programs.

The Children's Trust and other local child advocate organizations know how important high-quality early learning is and are investing heavily in making sure Miami-Dade's early learning programs have incentives and funding to provide the best learning environments. In 2018, The Trust launched the Thrive by 5 initiative, recognizing the importance of early brain development and its impact on later life success. Since then, The Trust has increased its early childhood investment by $20 million to bring the total annual investment to $48 million. We are focused on ensuring that all children in our community have access to high-quality early learning experiences and that early learning providers have the financial resources and support to achieve and maintain high-quality services.

More help could come at the national level, where Congress is currently considering the Build Back Better Act, which currently includes $400 billion for child care and pre-K. Whether the bill, which has been described as a game-changer for the industry, is ultimately adopted remains a question mark.

In the meantime, The Children's Trust is leveraging resources and expertise to ensure a cohesive approach to early childhood development initiatives. The Trust recently convened national, state and local experts, business leaders, and advocates, to examine what is currently being done and what can be improved upon in the future. Also at the meeting, Miami Dade Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** announced the creation of a Miami-Dade County Children's Commission, which will focus on the 0-5 age agenda.

Finding the right program for your child

While additional help may be on the horizon, parents still face real time dilemmas in where to enroll their children, because of waiting lists at high-quality early learning centers due to staff shortages. Here are some tips to finding the right program for your kids:

How do you feel when you walk in the program?

Are the children playing and interacting with each other?

Are the staff engaged and playing with the children?

Are the staff smiling and cheerful?

Is the facility clean and organized?

What is the outside area like? Is it spacious? Is there room to run?

What are the program's policies for sick children?

How flexible are its hours (is early and late drop off available)?

What kind of meals/snacks are provided?

What training/credentials do the staff possess?

From an early learning perspective, the pandemic has presented both opportunities and unmistakable challenges: Never before has the importance of early learning been so clear, but at the same time the fiscal impact of the related economic downturn significantly set back the industry in the short term. To ensure children have the opportunities they deserve, public officials and parents must come together to ensure high-quality early learning is a top priority in our community. To find a high-quality early learning program in your neighborhood call 2-1-1 or visit TheChildrenstrust.org.

Rachel\_Spector (1) (1).jpgRachel Spector, MSW, has over 25 years' experience in the field of early childhood development and early learning; she currently oversees funding for K-5 after-school and summer programs and early childhood development, including Miami-Dade County's Thrive by 5 early learning quality improvement system, at The Children's Trust. For more information, visit [*www.TheChildrensTrust.org*](http://www.TheChildrensTrust.org)

**Load-Date:** December 23, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Omicron concerns are changing COVID rules in South Florida again. Here's a guide*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64C3-G5P1-JC3J-X47G-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

December 22, 2021 Wednesday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** coronavirus

**Length:** 1767 words

**Byline:**  Michelle Marchante and Carli Teproff

Miami Herald

**Body**

The rapid spread of omicron appears likely to dampen holiday plans.

Some familiar pandemic sights, restrictions, and closures have begun to return in Miami-Dade and Broward County. ***COVID***-19 test sites are flooded with long lines again. And cases have been on the rise in the last week throughout Florida, with some days seeing increases not seen since September during the delta wave.

The omicron variant, which was first identified on Nov. 24 in South Africa, is now the dominant strain in the U.S., including in Miami-Dade.

Miami-Dade Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** is encouraging people to take precautions for their holiday gatherings, including dining outdoors and getting tested. Concerns over rising ***COVID***-19 cases have also pushed South Florida hospitals to limit visitations; event organizers to cancel some concerts; and has even affected jury duty.

Keeping track of all the changes can get confusing. Here's a list to help track the ***COVID*** rules, restrictions and closures in South Florida. This list will be updated as the ***COVID*** situation changes.

South Florida ***COVID*** rules, restrictions and closures

Supermarkets: Open. Most grocery stores have dropped the ***mask*** requirement for fully vaccinated customers or pivoted to recommending masks. If you're unsure of a store's rule, look for a sign on the front door. It's also worth noting that Publix, Winn-Dixie and other supermarkets might have purchase limits on certain items due to supply chain issues.

Pharmacies: Open. Walgreens and CVS Health, which owns Navarro Discount Pharmacies, CVS y mas and traditional CVS stores, do not require fully vaccinated customers to wear masks. Unvaccinated customers are asked to ***mask*** up.

Restaurants: Open. You can eat inside or outside in both Miami-Dade and Broward.

Stores: Open. Some stores might have a ***mask*** mandate in place.

MIA\_AIRPORT\_HOLIDAY\_DAV10A traveler pulls along his luggage while walking through a concourse at Miami International Airport in Miami, Florida, on Tuesday, November 23, 2021.

Transportation: At Miami International Airport and Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport, masks are still required inside the airport and on planes due to a federal mandate. The mandate also applies to Brightline, Tri-Rail, Metrorail, Metromover, buses, taxis, Uber, Lyft and other public transportation options. And if you're flying internationally, keep in mind that each country has its own vaccination, testing and quarantine rules.

***COVID***-19 testing: County-run and health department-run sites in South Florida offer free testing. The test is covered by your insurance. If you're uninsured, a federal program will cover it. Miami International Airport and Fort-Lauderdale Hollywood International Airport also offer testing, but it costs money.

Several sites in Miami-Dade will be open 24/7 for testing, including Tropical Park, South Dade Government Center, Zoo Miami, Dan Paul Plaza and Miami International Airport.

Broward County opened five more ***COVID***-19 test sites to help with demand and long lines. These new test sites will be at Mullins Park in Coral Springs, Lauderhill Sports Park in Lauderhill, Tree Tops Park in Davie, Tradewinds Park in Coconut Creek and Central Broward Park & Broward County Stadium in Lauderhill. At least four of the sites previously served as testing or vaccination sites.

For now, at-home test kits can be purchased through Amazon and select retailers, including Walmart, CVS, Target and Walgreens. But beware: Retailers are limiting how many test kits people can buy.

On Dec. 31, Miami-Dade County handed out about 75,000 ***COVID***-19 home tests at eight libraries. The county has been doing these giveaways for the last week, handing out more than 150,000 testing kits between Christmas Eve and Monday evening.

On Dec. 30, Broward County distributed at-home ***COVID*** rapid test kits to residents outside nine public libraries. There were a limited number of kits and only two were allowed per household. People were asked to show proof of Broward residency to get one.

What are the rules at South Florida airports? You'll need to know about ***COVID*** and parking

Courts: Miami-Dade criminal jury trials are paused through Dec. 31 due to surging ***COVID*** cases. It's not clear whether jury trials in Miami-Dade civil court are also affected. On Thursday, Miami-Dade's chief judge issued a ***mask*** mandate for all courthouses. No announcements have been made for Broward courts.

County buildings: Starting Wednesday, Dec. 22, masks are required in all Miami-Dade government buildings. On Wednesday, Broward Mayor Michael Udine announced that employees are required to wear masks in government buildings. Masks are now required inside Coral Springs facilities.

Jannie Garcia RN, Jordan Pflum RN, Yudi Herrera RN, Kristin Percival Schmalz RN Nurses Jannie Garcia, Jordan Pflum, Yudi Herrera, and Kristin Percival Schmalz review staffing and operational plans in a pre-shift team huddle at Memorial Hospital Pembroke in this file photo.

Hospitals: As of Dec. 28, Jackson Health System, Miami-Dade's public healthcare provider, changed its visitation guidelines, which has canceled visitations for most patients due to rising ***COVID*** cases and omicron variant concerns. Under the new restrictions, only pediatric, maternity and rehabilitation patients without a confirmed or suspected ***COVID*** diagnosis will be allowed one healthy visitor daily. Patients who are in end-of-life care and don't have a confirmed or suspected ***COVID*** diagnosis will also still be allowed to have healthy visitors.

Baptist Health South Florida said the guidelines continuously change and the rules vary, depending on the property.

The maternity ward at Fort Lauderdale's Holy Cross Health was temporarily closed because of ***COVID***-related staffing shortages.

Schools: The current protocol in Miami-Dade and Broward public schools is that parents can decide if their child should wear a ***mask*** or not. But Miami-Dade schools now require all adults to wear a ***mask*** on public school property. In Broward, masks are required for only visitors and vendors.

The ***mask*** policy of each charter school is set by its governing board. Most of the major public charter schools in South Florida, such as Academica, recommend masks but are letting parents decide if their child should wear a ***mask*** or not.

At public universities and colleges, such as Florida International University and Miami-Dade College, masks are recommended but not required. Private universities have their own rules. The University of Miami, for example, requires masks indoors but not outside.

MIA\_20211221AD1685MiamiHeatvsIndianaPacers.JPGMiami Heat forward Udonis Haslem (40) attempts to block a shot by Indiana Pacers forward Isaiah Jackson (23) in the fourth quarter at the FTX Arena in Miami on Tuesday, December 21, 2021.

Sports venues: FTX Arena requires everyone ages 2 and older to wear a ***mask***, regardless of vaccination status. If you're planning to see the Miami Heat, proof of a negative test or vaccination is not required unless you want to sit within 15 feet of the court, also known as the "Red Zone." This is an NBA requirement, not one created by the Heat.

At Sunrise's FLA Live Arena, masks are recommended, not required. At Hard Rock Stadium, home of the Miami Dolphins, and at loanDepot park, home of the Miami Marlins, masks are recommended.

The NHL shut down the Florida Panthers through the league's Christmas break due to a wave of ***COVID*** cases, but the team returned to the ice on Wednesday, playing a home game against the New York Rangers.

Concerts: Every event is different, so you'll want to check your email frequently to see if there are any updates. iHeartRadio canceled its Miami Jingle Ball concert on Sunday over omicron concerns. Harry Styles' Capital One Beach Bash that was set to be held Thursday at Lummus Park in Miami Beach was also canceled due to an increase in cases.

On Your Feet[1].jpgChristie Prades as Gloria Estefan in the National Tour of "On Your Feet!" that is scheduled for January 2022 at Actors' Playhouse at the Miracle Theatre in Coral Gables.

Performing arts venues: Adrienne Arsht Center requires a recent negative ***COVID*** test or proof of vaccination for entry. Masks are also required. The Miami City Ballet's performance of George Balanchine's "The Nutcracker" at the Arsht Center was called off because someone involved in the production had a "breakthrough case" of ***COVID***. At Broward Center for the performing Arts, the ***COVID*** rules depend on the event. Most events are requiring masks. Some events may also require a recent negative ***COVID*** test or proof of vaccination for entry. Cirque Dreams Holidaze scheduled for Dec. 26 and 27 at Au-Rene Theater at The Broward Center for the Performing Arts was postponed. The new dates have not been released. At Actors' Playhouse at The Miracle Theatre guests 12 and older are also required to show a negative test or proof of vaccination. Masks are also required inside.

Attractions: Health policies vary, depending on the place. At Zoo Miami, it is required for guests ages 2 and older to wear masks inside all indoor facilities, even if vaccinated. Some activities remain closed, including the monorail. Guests are also encouraged to buy tickets ahead of time. The HistoryMiami Museum will be closed until January 10, 2022.

At Flamingo Gardens in Broward, masks and social distancing are not required. In Central Florida, Universal Orlando Resort updated its face covering policy to start requiring masks at all indoor locations and in ride queue lines starting Friday.

For the second year in a row on New Year's Eve the Big Orange at the InterContinental Hotel has been canceled due to ***COVID***; fireworks and a concert at Bayfront Park will still go on.

Malls: Stores and restaurants inside malls are allowed to have their own ***mask*** policies. What about in mall common areas? It depends on where you go. At Aventura Mall and Brickell City Centre, for example, masks are recommended, but not required.

At CityPlace Doral and at malls owned and run by Simon, including Miami International Mall, The Falls, Sawgrass Mills and Dadeland, fully vaccinated shoppers don't need to wear a ***mask***. People who are not vaccinated are encouraged to ***mask*** up.

Do you need to ***mask*** up at the mall? It depends where you're shopping in South Florida

Is there a ***COVID*** rule change or ***COVID***-related cancellation in South Florida that's not on this list? Let us know by emailing [*mmarchante@miamiherald.com*](mailto:mmarchante@miamiherald.com) and [*cteproff@miamiherald.com*](mailto:cteproff@miamiherald.com)

Miami Herald staff writer Devoun Cetoute and Jordan McPherson contributed to this report.

This article will be updated.

**Load-Date:** January 4, 2022

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Miami jury trials paused for two weeks as COVID surge hits legal system*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64BV-VNF1-DYJM-M27D-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

December 21, 2021 Tuesday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** crime

**Length:** 460 words

**Byline:**  David Ovalle

Miami Herald

**Body**

As ***COVID*** cases surge in South Florida, courts in Miami-Dade county have paused jury trials through Dec. 31.

"While we always suspend jury pool during the holidays, with the exception of specially set court proceedings, in an abundance of caution we have called off all jurors until after the holidays," court spokeswoman Eunice Sigler said Tuesday in a statement.

"Pursuant to the current Miami-Dade County and Florida Supreme Court directives, we may not impose ***mask*** mandates; however, we continue to strongly encourage the wearing of masks at all Miami-Dade Courthouses when individuals are in confined spaces with others."

The pause, which took effect on Monday, comes as Miami-Dade's criminal justice system is dealing with outbreaks amid the surge in the highly contagious omicron variant of the coronavirus.

The Miami-Dade State Attorney's Office has reported 37 employees who have tested positive for ***COVID*** since Dec. 13. The Public Defender's Office has reported 18 positive cases since Dec. 15.

The decision was made "based on the rising number of ***COVID*** cases," Miami-Dade Circuit Judge Andrea Ricker Wolfson, the chief administrative judge in the criminal division, wrote in an email Sunday to high-ranking officials in the local justice system. "Thank you and please stay safe."

It was not immediately clear whether jury trials in Miami-Dade civil court will be affected. As of Tuesday morning, the 11th Judicial Circuit had not made any announcements about updated safety protocols. The impact of the decision will likely be limited -- December is generally slow for trials anyway because of the holidays.

Across Florida, in-person court hearings were largely stopped in March 2020 as the threat of the coronavirus spread. Florida courts turned to virtual hearings, but in-person hearings -- with ***mask*** mandates and social distancing requirements -- started resuming earlier this year as ***COVID*** numbers waned and more people got vaccinated.

Miami's criminal court reopens to the publicAfter more than a year mostly closed because of the coronavirus pandemic, Miami's Richard E. Gerstein Justice Building reopened to the public on Monday, June 28.

By November, citing improved ***COVID*** conditions and widespread ***vaccine*** availability, Florida Supreme Court Chief Justice Charles Canaday lifted ***mask*** requirements for court hearings.

Miami-Dade Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** last month also lifted indoor ***mask*** mandates in county government buildings, citing the low positivity rate after the summer's delta variant surge. Shortly after, Miami-Dade Chief Judge Nushin Sayfie also lifted indoor ***mask*** requirements in courts, which are county-run buildings.

Judges, attorneys, jurors and court staffers are still allowed to wear masks, and some have during recent Miami trials.

**Load-Date:** December 21, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Omicron is now the dominant COVID-19 variant in Miami-Dade, genomic surveillance shows*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64BS-WKR1-DYJM-M0XB-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

December 20, 2021 Monday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** coronavirus

**Length:** 1475 words

**Byline:**  Daniel Chang and Ana Claudia Chacin

Miami Herald

**Body**

Omicron has become the dominant strain of the coronavirus circulating in Miami-Dade, overtaking the delta variant in a matter of weeks and becoming the primary driver of new ***COVID***-19 cases in the county, according to new genomic surveillance data released Monday.

Genetic sequencing of the virus in Miami-Dade shows omicron's rapid growth from a tiny fraction of hundreds of samples tested during the first week of December to nearly three of every four samples monitored last week.

"It is absolutely astonishing how contagious this variant has proven to be," said Miami-Dade Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava***, whose office provided the genomic surveillance data.

Major jump in Miami omicron cases, positivity rates in December

The latest report from NOMI Health, the healthcare company contracted by Miami-Dade to conduct testing, vaccination and sequencing in the county, found that 76% of 504 ***COVID***-19 samples taken Dec. 14-15 were the omicron variant -- compared to 64% of 378 samples collected Dec. 10-13.

Among the 373 samples collected Dec. 1-5, about 1.3% or 5 omicron cases were detected.

omicron\_increase\_Dec20

Levine Cava said she also was struck by the spike in Miami-Dade ***COVID***-19 tests coming back positive, now at about 10% versus 1% a month ago, according to county data. Last week, she reinstated in Miami-Dade an order requiring daily bed inventories and ***COVID*** patient counts from hospitals across the county.

"It's definitely here," Levine Cava said of the omicron variant, "And it's on us to protect ourselves and still the most important thing we can do is vaccinate."

ENHTropical Park ***Covid*** Testing\_SN148Cars line up Dec. 17 at Tropical Park off Bird Road and Southwest 79th Avenue to get a ***COVID*** test. Tropical Park is one of Miami-Dade County's larger ***COVID*** testing and ***vaccine*** sites.

Omicron's prevalence in Miami-Dade was not confirmed by the Florida Department of Health, which conducts genetic sequencing of the coronavirus at state labs and works with federal, local and private groups to collect and analyze genomic surveillance data.

Weesam Khoury, director of communications for the health department, declined to comment Monday on Miami-Dade's findings.

"It is unfortunate that the county has decided it is more important to share these data with the press rather than coordinating with the Florida Department of Health or Centers for Disease Control and Prevention," she said. "The Department can only make determinations based on verifiable evidence.

Khoury added that, "It would benefit the state of Florida and the entire scientific community if these local officials uploaded their sequencing data into a transparent and verifiable data base. ... The Department expects to see a rise of the omicron variant in Florida."

While Florida requires healthcare providers to report all ***COVID***-19 test results, it is not clear what requirements or processes are in place for NOMI Health or Miami-Dade to report the findings of genetic sequencing to the state.

'I would be concerned about omicron'

The findings from Miami-Dade's genomic surveillance report track with the results of local genetic sequencing and PCR testing conducted by University of Miami physicians and infectious disease experts.

Dr. David Andrews, an associate professor in the Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine at UM's Miller School of Medicine, is leading the university's genomic surveillance of ***COVID***-19 in Miami-Dade.

Andrews said that 94% of 70 samples collected and genetically sequenced last week detected the omicron variant. He added that UM also has monitored for the variant using polymerase chain reaction or PCR tests that can detect mutations unique to omicron.

"There's no question that omicron is dominant in Miami-Dade," he said.

Andrews said he worried that omicron's spread could be fueled in part by asymptomatic or mild cases.

"Intuitively, I would be concerned about omicron, just as was the case for delta, because it's so transmissible that any patient that's asymptomatic and carrying it is probably going to spread it," he said. "It's hard to believe that a virus can arrive and in three to four weeks predominate in a large population."

Andrews said early indications are that omicron mostly causes mild symptoms in those who are vaccinated and those who have had a prior ***COVID***-19 infection, though he emphasized that there is still a lot to learn about the long-term effects of the disease.

"Where I think there's an unknown is: What is the array of symptoms and what is the disease it causes in patients who are unvaccinated? ... With this rate of prevalence, we're going to know pretty soon."

Omicron's dominance was not unexpected. The variant's extensive mutations appear to increase its ability to escape ***vaccine*** and natural immunity, according to experts, and many people are relaxing on prevention measures such as masking and social distancing.

"These characteristics can result in a rapid acceleration of cases, especially in the absence of consistent public health messaging and layered approaches to mitigation," said Jason Salemi, an epidemiologist at the University of South Florida who has tracked the state's ***COVID*** data.

Risk of patient surges at hospitals

But even if omicron causes mild disease, the variant's increased ability to spread -- including among those who are vaccinated or have had the disease before -- raises the risk of patient surges and sickened staff at hospitals, said Justin Senior, CEO of the Safety Net Hospital Alliance of Florida, a consortium of public hospital systems.

"It creates a difficult situation," Senior said. "You have to put a lot of procedures and protocols in place to make sure other patients and your staff don't get infected."

Senior said he's also concerned about the rising number of ***COVID***-19 tests returning positive because that has been a precursor to increased hospital admissions during prior surges. However, he said, it's too early for Florida hospitals to know what they can expect from omicron.

The rate of vaccination, boosters and prior infections in a community -- in addition to the overall age of the population -- can have an impact on disease severity, hospitalizations and deaths, he said.

"You prepare for the worst and hope for the best," he said.

Accounting for 73 percent of new U.S. infections

Omicron was first detected in South Africa in November and has rapidly spread around the globe. The variant is now the dominant version of the coronavirus in the United States, accounting for 73% of all new infections for the week ending Dec. 18 -- a nearly six-fold increase in omicron's share of infections in one week, according to the CDC.

The first cases of omicron in Florida were reported on Dec. 7. Miami-Dade's mayor confirmed the county's first case of the variant on Dec. 10. The variant also has been detected in Miami-Dade's wastewater, though such monitoring does not give public health officials an indication of how prevalent the strain is in the community.

MIA\_COVIDPRESSER\_SN083Nomi Health General Manager of Florida Hospitality & Travel Ron Goncalves speaks about how Nomi is preparing to meet the increased demand for testing and vaccination as a consequence of the new ***COVID***-19 variant, omicron, during a press conference at Tropical Park in Miami, Florida, on Thursday, Dec. 16, 2021.

After two months of declining cases in Florida following the summer's delta variant-fueled surge, cases are rising once again -- with Miami-Dade leading all counties in new infections with a case rate of 400 per 100,000 population during the week that ended Dec. 16, according to the Florida Department of Health's ***COVID*** situation report.

South Florida's three most populous counties saw the largest increase in cases over the prior week -- with new infections rising by 322% in Miami-Dade, 213% in Broward and 160% in Palm Beach.

During the first week of December, 22 states -- including Florida -- reported at least one ***COVID***-19 case attributed to the omicron variant, according to the CDC. Among the 43 U.S. cases with initial follow-up, one hospitalization and no deaths were reported.

On Monday, Miami-Dade hospitals reported 279 inpatients with ***COVID***-19, including 35 in intensive care.

As doctors, scientists, public health officials and hospital administrators keep a close eye on omicron to see how its effects may vary from prior variants, there's no mystery that vaccines are the most effective way for people to protect themselves from serious illness, hospitalization and death, said Salemi, the USF epidemiologist.

"I would expect cases to continue to rise and an increasing proportion of cases to be based on infection with an omicron lineage," he said. "How much, where, in whom, and the extent to which this translates into increased hospitalizations and deaths ... well, a lot of that depends on how well we utilize the tools we have to fight omicron."

**Load-Date:** December 21, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Florida COVID update: Cases nearing September highs as 8,785 added, figures not seen in months*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64B1-M861-JC3J-X52T-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

December 17, 2021 Friday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** coronavirus

**Length:** 501 words

**Byline:**  Devoun Cetoute

Miami Herald

**Body**

Florida reported 8,785 ***COVID***-19 cases and one new death on Thursday, according to Friday's report to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, based on Miami Herald calculations of CDC data.

That's the most cases for a single-day report since 10,073 on Sept. 22, when Florida was on the tail end of the surging delta variant. Other days that were higher since then used combined reports from multiple days.

Earlier this fall, daily new cases reached over 15,000, so the current case levels have a way to go before reaching Delta's record-breaking days, according to Herald calculations.

In all, Florida has recorded at least 3,739,439 confirmed ***COVID*** cases and 62,192 deaths.

In the past seven days, the state has added 26 deaths and 4,116 cases per day on average, according to Herald calculations of CDC data.

FLORIDA ***COVID VACCINE*** RATES

About 13,472,644 eligible Floridians -- 62.7% of the state's population -- have completed the two-dose series of either the Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna vaccines or have completed Johnson & Johnson's single-dose ***vaccine***, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

VACCINATIONS IN SOUTH FLORIDA AND MANATEE COUNTY

Here's how many people have been fully vaccinated in South Florida and Manatee County, according to the CDC.

In Miami-Dade County, about 2,162,881 people, or 79.6% of the county's total population, are fully vaccinated.

In Broward County, about 1,307,343 people are fully vaccinated, or 66.9% of the county's population.

In Palm Beach County, about 939,308 people are fully vaccinated, or 62.8% of the county's population.

In Monroe County, about 54,909 people are fully vaccinated, or 74% of the county's population.

In Manatee County, about 235,745 people are fully vaccinated, or 58.5% of the county's population.

***COVID***-19 hospitalizations in Florida

There were 1,514 people hospitalized for ***COVID***-19 in Florida, according to the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services Friday report. This data is reported from 257 Florida hospitals. That is 42 fewer people than in Thursday's report, when 256 hospitals reported.

***COVID***-19 patients take up 2.60% of all in-patient beds in the latest report's hospitals, compared to 2.7% in the previous day's reporting hospitals.

Of the people hospitalized in Florida, 281 were in intensive care unit beds, a decrease of nine. That represents about 4.49% of the state's ICU hospital beds, compared to 4.7% the previous day.

Friday's Miami-Dade County report said there were 147 ***COVID*** patients in the county's hospitals on Thursday. Of the 31 new ***COVID*** patients, 23 (74.19%) had not been vaccinated.

On Thursday, as the omicron virus has begun to spread rapidly, Miami-Dade County Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** reinstated the county's July emergency order to require hospitals across the county to report daily bed inventories and ***COVID*** patient counts.

Broward County's Friday report said there were 140 ***COVID*** patients in the county's hospitals, a decrease of five from the previous day's report.

**Load-Date:** December 17, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*UM COVID cases surge after Thanksgiving break, finals pivot online, grad parties canceled*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64B1-M861-JC3J-X52V-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

December 17, 2021 Friday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** coronavirus

**Length:** 1088 words

**Byline:**  Jesse Lieberman and Jimena Tavel

Miami Herald

**Body**

With only days left in the semester, University of Miami has found itself dealing with a surge in ***COVID*** cases.

"Many of my students have it," said a professor who says more of his students have tested positive than any other time during the semester. "It's a total outbreak." The professor did not want to be identified by name.

Cases first started to tick up on Dec. 6, a week after students returned from Thanksgiving break. Some on campus have felt that the current outbreak could have been avoided had the university finished classes prior to the break, which was the schedule last year during the coronavirus pandemic.

"Going elsewhere for Thanksgiving and returning is not a good idea if people don't have to get tested when they return," said Letizia La Sorte, 22, a junior at University of Miami who tested positive right before finals, despite being fully vaccinated. She had traveled to the Dominican Republic during Thanksgiving break.

After the break, UM advised students to get tested but did not require it.

Recent surge in UM ***COVID*** cases

Over the past four days, UM has seen a rapid rise in cases, based on the university's ***COVID***-19 dashboard, which has been tracking new ***COVID*** cases among students, faculty and staff. On Wednesday, 78 new ***COVID*** cases were listed among students, the highest level since the dashboard began on Aug. 15 , 2021, when there were four recorded student cases . On Tuesday, there were 68 new cases among students, and 67 new cases on Monday. The university saw a reduction in cases on Thursday, with 57 student cases.

Among faculty and staff, there were 15 new ***COVID*** cases on Thursday, 28 on Wednesday, 14 on Tuesday and 12 on Monday.

By contrast, there was one new ***COVID*** case among students on Dec. 1 and no new cases among faculty and staff.

"We will continue to ask members of the University to do their part to keep our campuses and our community safe and healthy," the university said in an emailed response to questions from the Miami Herald. "The University has strongly encouraged postponing any non-essential, in-person gatherings . . The University also encourages faculty and staff who can work remotely to consider doing so through the end of December."

Breakout after Thanksgiving break

The University acknowledged it had expected an increase in ***COVID*** cases following the break and asked students to be tested upon their return.

"By encouraging students to test, we were able to identify ***COVID***-19 infections even in students who are asymptomatic."

The university also emphasized that its indoor ***mask*** mandate and testing protocols remain in place.

The school did note, however, that commencement school receptions have been canceled or moved online, although commencement will continue as planned for Friday afternoon. The university has not enacted any new restrictions in place in light of the outbreak.

The recent discovery of the omicron variant of ***COVID*** has led to a run-up in ***COVID*** cases, both globally and across the United States, including Florida. Florida reported 8,785 new ***COVID***-19 cases and one new death on Thursday, the most single-day number of cases since September and the delta variant surge.

Come spring semester, students who return to campus will have to get tested within 48 hours of returning to campus, UM said in its email.

Miami Dade Mayor Levine Cava reinstates order requiring daily ***COVID*** patient countsAs the omicron variant sweeps across the world, Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** reinstated in Miami-Dade an order requiring daily bed inventories and ***COVID*** patient counts from hospitals across the county.

Medical school classes pivot to online

The combined total of new cases on Wednesday -- including both students and faculty and staff -- was 106 cases. Of those, a record 25 came from the medical campus near Jackson Memorial Hospital, according to the dashboard.

Brandon Apagüeño, a first-year medical student at UM, said that when he showed up to class Monday, he realized two of his classmates were absent.

He heard they had tested positive for ***COVID*** and because he had been in close contact with them, he immediately got tested himself. Apagüeño, 25, took a PCR and a rapid test later Monday, and both came back positive.

"I'm fine now," said Apagüeño, who's fully vaccinated. "I just had a low-grade fever and some congestion."

After he reported to the university administration that he got sick, he found out he wasn't the only one. In fact, because so many of his classmates also reported positive results, he said the medical school moved to virtual learning until the last day of the semester Friday.

"It was just like a domino effect," Apagüeño said. "A bunch of people ended up testing themselves, and it ended up that a lot of us were actually infected, and then they decided that it'd be best to continue on Zoom."

"The school was really good in their response," he added.

Some faculty at the Coral Gables campus have also converted their finals to online in light of the recent surge.

On Thursday, UM sent out an email titled "Redoubling our ***COVID***-19 Health Measures." The email encouraged community members to get their booster shots and avoid "non-essential, in-person gatherings."

"The finish-line to another successful in-person semester is coming quickly into view. Our shared commitment to our public-health measures -- and to each other -- has enabled us to navigate the pandemic while still providing our 'Canes community with an engaging and enriching on-campus experience," read the email signed by Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost Jeffrey Duerk and Executive Vice President for Business and Finance and Chief Operating Officer Jacqueline Travisano.

During the fall semester, UM had a spike at the start in August but maintained mostly low ***COVID***-19 numbers during the semester. From Oct. 1 to early December, UM consistently had an average of one or two ***COVID*** cases a day, the dashboard shows.

UM returned to full in-person classes this semester, with students side by side, virtually identical to pre-pandemic classes. In August, when the semester began, Florida was contending with a surge in ***COVID*** cases brought on by the delta variant. A new surge has begun in recent weeks due to the omicron variant.

Although students were required to wear masks inside, the rule enforcement varied from class to class and building to building. In some classes, students didn't wear masks and had to be routinely reminded to put a ***mask*** on; others instructors allowed students to attend classes without wearing masks on their faces.

**Load-Date:** December 17, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Jackson Health is changing visitation rules as omicron variant spreads, hospital says*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:649X-BDK1-DYJM-M34K-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

December 16, 2021 Thursday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** coronavirus

**Length:** 388 words

**Byline:**  Devoun Cetoute

Miami Herald

**Body**

Jackson Health System will be changing its visitation guideline due to the hospital seeing an increased presence of the omicron ***COVID***-19 variant, the hospital said.

Starting Friday, only one healthy visitor will be allowed per day for certain patients, Miami-Dade's public healthcare provider announced Thursday night.

jackson health tweet

Jackson Memorial Hospital saw its ***COVID*** patient count hit 58 on Thursday -- the first time it was above 50 since late November.

In its new guidelines, all visitors must have a scheduled appointment, visitation with a current patient or an emergency requiring medical attention.

Visits for other purposes -- such as visiting the gift shop or dining area -- is not allowed.

All visitors will be screened and get their temperatures checked. They also must wear a ***mask*** covering their nose and mouth at all times while in Jackson facilities and follow physical distancing, hand hygiene and PPE guidelines.

Patients allowed to have a visitor include hospitalized adults, inpatient behavioral health patients, outpatients and those in long-term care facilities.

Adult emergency departments will not permit visitors.

Visitation exceptions will be made for all pediatrics; labor and delivery patients; end-of-life patients; and those with physical, intellectual, developmental or cognitive impairments or disabilities.

To find out more on Jackson Health's visitation changes visit its website.

In Miami-Dade, at least six cases of the omicron variant have been detected.

Miami-Dade Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava***'s office confirmed Thursday that five of 373 samples sequenced -- or 1%-- of tests taken around two weeks ago were cases caused by the omicron variant. The rest were lineages of the delta variant.

On Thursday, Levine Cava held a press conference to encourage outdoor dining for the holidays as the omicron variant spreads.

mayor tweet

She had no plans to return mandatory ***mask*** rules for county buildings, but announced a few new actions to combat the surge:

Miami-Dade hospitals will resume daily reporting

Mobile vaccination trucks will be put in underserved communities

Homebound residents will have a way to get vaccinated

Expanding monoclonal treatment

Sequencing for variants at county sites

This comes after Florida saw its highest single-day increase of ***COVID*** cases since September.

**Load-Date:** December 16, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Mayor encourages outdoor holiday dining as omicron outbreak looms in Miami-Dade*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:649X-BDK1-DYJM-M348-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

December 16, 2021 Thursday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** coronavirus

**Length:** 905 words

**Byline:**  Douglas Hanks and Ana Claudia Chacin

Miami Herald

**Body**

Holiday dinners would be best outdoors and people should wear masks indoors among unvaccinated friends and family, Miami-Dade Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** said Thursday as her administration preps for a surge in ***COVID***-19 cases from a more contagious version of ***COVID***-19 known as the omicron variant.

Levine Cava stopped well short of urging residents to alter holiday plans during her pre-Christmas press conference at the Tropical Park county testing site. As she spoke, cars and trucks snaked in a line for ***COVID*** testing amid a spike in demand. Her remarks centered on suggestions to lower the risk of catching ***COVID*** as more signs point to rising spread of the disease in Miami-Dade and beyond.

"Please take your gathering outside into this beautiful weather. Gathering outdoors, we know, reduces the risks significantly of transmission," she said. "Wear your masks around large crowds of people, people you don't know are vaccinated."

MIA\_COVIDPRESSER\_SN033Miami-Dade County Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** talks about the latest measures taken by the county to control the spread of Omicron, the new variant of ***Covid***-19, during a press conference at Tropical Park in Miami, Florida, on Thursday, December 16, 2021.

Levine Cava said she had no plans to return mandatory ***mask*** rules for county buildings, a restriction she put in place during the surge of the delta variant in July and which Levine Cava lifted on Nov. 5. She urged people to get vaccinated against ***COVID***-19 and to receive booster shots, which research shows is a particularly helpful protection against omicron.

She said Miami-Dade this week launched an outreach operation to bring free booster shots -- as well as first-time vaccinations -- to home-bound residents. Anyone interested can call 888-201-5490 or email [*vaccinations@ilshealth.com*](mailto:vaccinations@ilshealth.com)

While confirmed omicron cases remain rare in Miami-Dade, multiple indicators suggest ***COVID*** is rapidly on the rise in Florida's most populous county, likely due to the new variant. The seven-day average of ***COVID*** tests coming back positive hit 7% this week, up from just 1% in tests taken 30 days ago.

Jackson Memorial Hospital, Miami-Dade's public healthcare provider, saw its ***COVID***-19 patient count hit 58 on Thursday, the first time it was above 50 since late November.

Regular ***COVID*** analysis of the county's sewage system has confirmed the presence of omicron, and a sampling of ***COVID*** test results at county testing centers at the start of December also detected the variant.

In Miami-Dade, at least six cases of the omicron variant have been detected. Levine Cava's office confirmed Thursday that five of 373 samples sequenced-- or 1%-- of tests taken around two weeks ago were cases caused by the omicron variant. The rest were lineages of the delta variant.

On Dec. 10, CardioPath, a private lab in Doral, confirmed the county's first case.

The previous positive 746 samples sequenced by Nomi Health, the healthcare company Miami-Dade partnered with for testing, vaccination and sequencing, were all caused by delta lineages. These samples dated back to tests taken since Oct. 31.

Only a small percentage of ***COVID*** positive PCR tests are sampled, and ***COVID***-19 cases caused by omicron have been shown to double every couple of days, so the number of coronavirus cases caused by the omicron variant in Miami-Dade is likely much higher.

But the early indicators likely are just hints of a wider surge already underway in Miami-Dade and beyond, a disease expert said.

"Data more than one week old may grossly underestimate the prevalence of omicron that is currently circulating," said Jason Salemi, an associate professor of epidemiology at the University of South Florida's college of public health, in an email to the Herald.

***covid***-19\_cases\_rising\_Dec16

Just two weeks ago, Florida's seven-day average of cases added each day was around 1,900. In the past two days alone, the state has added just over 10,500 cases, according to data published by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

"The best explanation for these pronounced increases is a rapidly spreading omicron variant, and I would anticipate increasing cases, test positivity, and prevalence of the omicron lineages in the coming weeks," wrote Salemi.

County testing sites, including Tropical Park, are seeing a spike in demand this week. The head of the Miami-Dade testing operation said that's likely a mix of more people getting sick, as well as rising interest in tests over the holidays, be it as a precaution before traveling to visit family or testing requirements for flying into foreign airports.

MIA\_COVIDPRESSER\_SN083Nomi Health General Manager of Florida Hospitality & Travel Ron Goncalves speaks about how Nomi is preparing to meet the increase demand for testing and vaccination as a consequence of the new ***Covid***-19 variant, Omicron, during a press conference at Tropical Park in Miami, Florida, on Thursday, December 16, 2021.

"We've actually seen a spike in test demand over the last several days. We're adding staff. We're working around the clock," said Ron Goncalves, Florida general manager for Nomi Health, which has the county contract for vaccination and testing sites. He joined Levine Cava for the Tropical Park press conference.

"What was normally a 15-minute wait here has gone up to an hour in some instances," he said as cars backed up onto Bird Road from the park entrance. "We are working diligently to reduce those wait times."

**Load-Date:** December 16, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Pfizer COVID pill could come to Miami-Dade testing sites for quick treatment, mayor says*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:649T-0R81-JC3J-X34P-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

December 16, 2021 Thursday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** coronavirus

**Length:** 579 words

**Byline:**  Douglas Hanks

Miami Herald

**Body**

With Miami-Dade County ramping up for another potential ***COVID***-19 surge from the omicron variant, administrators hope a new treatment will help keep many infected people out of hospital beds.

The county government is preparing a plan to distribute Pfizer's new ***COVID***-19 treatment at Miami-Dade testing sites, in hopes of beginning treatment in the early stages of infection before symptoms worsen to the point that hospitalization is a possibility.

It's theoretical for now, because Miami-Dade has no supply of Paxlovid, a prescription drug that Pfizer says produces an 88% drop in the risk of hospitalization and death for at-risk adults who contract the virus. County administrators also don't have answers yet for who might qualify for the pill even if Miami-Dade had any to dispense. Pfizer doesn't have federal approval to sell the drug, but that's expected this month.

The Pfizer treatment calls for multiple doses over five days in combination with another drug called ritonavir.

Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** said her administration is prepping the plan to launch once the county gets supply and the go-ahead from any regulators or rule makers that will govern what's expected to be a rapid distribution of the promising drug.

"We're getting ourselves ready for when it is approved and released. Probably we will be fighting for supply just like we had to fight for ***vaccine*** supply back in the day," said Levine Cava, referring to the county's opening vaccination centers at the start of 2021. "But we've got a great structure set up -- with all of our testing sites and vaccination sites."

Pfizer has a deal to sell about $5 billion worth of the pills to the United States government for distribution. Miami-Dade's government is running testing centers across the county, managed by the for-profit healthcare firm Nomi Health.

Paxlovid requires a prescription, and Levine Cava said Nomi is considering having a pharmacist on site for dispensing the drug and either an in-person physician or a telemedicine option for authorizing use of the treatment.

Pfizer says someone infected with ***COVID*** should take Paxlovid in the early days of symptoms, and experts see the antiviral drug as a way to avoid the ***COVID*** hospitalizations that strained healthcare systems during outbreaks in 2020 and 2021.

This week, Levine Cava reinstated an emergency order requiring hospitals across the county to report counts of patients with ***COVID***, bed availability in intensive-care units, and ventilator supplies, as well as the portion of ***COVID*** patients who are vaccinated.

Levine Cava said the county is also preparing a large outreach effort to provide booster shots to vaccinated people who are homebound and unable to get to vaccination centers for a follow-up shot. She's holding a press conference at noon Thursday at the Tropical Park vaccination center to urge residents to take precautions against the virus heading into the holidays.

She said the prospect of Paxlovid distribution to head off severe cases could ease a main worry during ***COVID***-19 spreads, which is a surge of patients flooding hospital ICU wards.

"We're very hopeful this can be a game changer," Levine Cava said. "Certainly, overwhelming hospitals has been a top concern."

New omicron ***COVID***-19 variant detected in South AfricaThe World Health Organization (WHO) confirmed that omicron, a new ***COVID*** variant has been detected in South Africa. Not much is known about this variant yet other than it has a high mutation rate.

**Load-Date:** December 16, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Florida COVID update: Biggest jump in cases since September, with 6,381 added*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:649T-N2Y1-JC3J-X3TS-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

December 16, 2021 Thursday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** coronavirus

**Length:** 731 words

**Byline:**  Devoun Cetoute

Miami Herald

**Body**

Florida on Thursday reported 117 more deaths and 6,381 additional ***COVID***-19 cases to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, according to Miami Herald calculations of CDC data.

This is the largest multi-day increase of newly reported cases since Sept. 6, which saw 46,105. The CDC backlogs cases and deaths for Florida on Mondays and Thursdays, sometimes leading to big increases.

All but three of the newly reported deaths -- about 97% -- occurred since Nov. 18, according to the Herald analysis. About 63% of the newly reported have died in the past two weeks, the analysis showed.

In all, Florida has recorded at least 3,730,654 confirmed ***COVID*** cases and 62,191 deaths.

In the past seven days, on average, the state has added 26 deaths and 3,207 cases per day on average, according to Herald calculations of CDC data.

***COVID*** deaths in South Florida and Manatee County

The CDC's Community Profile Report released county-level death data for Florida's 67 counties.

It is unclear when these newly reported deaths occurred. The Community Profile Report updates Florida's county death tolls and rates about once every seven days, when or after the ***COVID***-19 weekly situation report is published by the Florida Department of Health on Fridays.

As of Friday's Community Profile Report, Florida had a death rate of 289 cumulative deaths per 100,000 people since the start of the pandemic. Two weeks ago, the state had a death rate of 287 deaths per 100,000 people.

Here's where death rates and tolls stand in South Florida and Manatee County, according to the CDC.

Miami-Dade County's death toll sits at 9,208, an increase of 21 deaths from the CDC's Dec. 9 report. That's a rate of 339 cumulative deaths per 100,000 people since the beginning of the pandemic.

Broward County's death toll sits at 4,957, an increase of 22 deaths. That's a rate of 254 cumulative deaths per 100,000 people since the beginning of the pandemic.

Palm Beach County's death toll sits at 4,317, an increase of 22 deaths. That's a rate of 288 cumulative deaths per 100,000 people since the beginning of the pandemic.

Monroe County's death toll still sits at 98, no increase. The county would be at a death rate of 132 deaths per 100,000 people if its population were that large.

Manatee County's death toll sits at 1,220, an increase of one. Manatee has a rate of 303 cumulative deaths per 100,000 people since the beginning of the pandemic.

FLORIDA ***COVID VACCINE*** RATES

About 13,460,713 eligible Floridians -- 62.7% of the state's population -- have completed the two-dose series of either the Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna vaccines or have completed Johnson & Johnson's single-dose ***vaccine***, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

VACCINATIONS IN SOUTH FLORIDA AND MANATEE COUNTY

Here's how many people have been fully vaccinated in South Florida and Manatee County, according to the CDC.

In Miami-Dade County, about 2,160,928 people, or 79.5% of the county's total population, are fully vaccinated.

In Broward County, about 1,306,132 people are fully vaccinated, or 66.9% of the county's population.

In Palm Beach County, about 938,562 people are fully vaccinated, or 62.7% of the county's population.

In Monroe County, about 54,872 people are fully vaccinated, or 73.9% of the county's population.

In Manatee County, about 235,582 people are fully vaccinated, or 58.4% of the county's population.

***COVID***-19 hospitalizations in Florida

There were 1,556 people hospitalized for ***COVID***-19 in Florida, according to the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services Thursday report. This data is reported from 256 Florida hospitals. That is eight fewer people than in Wednesday's report, when 235 hospitals reported.

***COVID***-19 patients take up 2.7% of all inpatient beds in the latest report's hospitals, compared to 2.87% in the previous day's reporting hospitals.

Of the people hospitalized in Florida, 290 were in intensive care unit beds, a decrease of one. That represents about 4.7% of the state's ICU hospital beds, compared to 4.7% the previous day.

The Miami-Dade County report no longer includes hospitalization information, but Miami-Dade Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** said the county will again be having hospitals report information.

Broward County's Thursday report said there were 145 ***COVID*** patients in the county's hospitals, an increase of 25 from the previous day's report.

**Load-Date:** December 23, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*In Miami-Dade, signs Christmas may overlap with a new COVID wave as omicron spreads*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:649Y-0VC1-DYJM-M3RR-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

December 16, 2021 Thursday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** coronavirus

**Length:** 1411 words

**Byline:**  Douglas Hanks

Miami Herald

**Body**

The fall brought a ***COVID*** lull in Miami-Dade County as administrators lifted emergency rules and virus statistics hit all-time lows. Those days are over, as Miami-Dade braces for the omicron variant's full impact and holiday gatherings ramp up ahead of Christmas.

"We cannot allow our hospitals to be overwhelmed with cases," Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** said at a press conference Thursday announcing her revival of an emergency order requiring hospitals to report daily ***COVID*** patient counts, intensive-care availability and other pandemic metrics the county stopped collecting last month.

Miami-Dade is seeing a spike in ***COVID***-19 tests coming back positive -- an average of 7% now, versus 1% a month ago, according to county data. The first sequencing of viral results from those tests confirms a scattering of omicron cases in Miami-Dade, but experts assume the actual count will be much higher as analysis catches up with real-time results.

Omicron is in Miami-Dade, and likely spreading quickly

"Data more than one week old may grossly underestimate the prevalence of omicron that is currently circulating," said Jason Salemi, an associate professor of epidemiology at the University of South Florida's college of public health, in an email to the Herald. "The best explanation for these pronounced increases is a rapidly spreading omicron variant, and I would anticipate increasing cases, test positivity, and prevalence of the omicron lineages in the coming weeks."

Professional sports teams are feeling the strain as ***COVID*** infections spread across rosters.

Even with high vaccination rates, all three North American sports leagues currently playing their seasons -- the NHL, NFL and NBA -- are seeing upticks in positive cases as the omicron variant spreads.

Florida Panthers have ***COVID*** roster troubles

For their game against the Los Angeles Kings Thursday night, the Florida Panthers were heading to the ice short-handed.

As of Thursday afternoon, the Panthers had five players -- forwards Ryan Lomberg, Sam Bennett and Carter Verhaeghe as well as defensemen Brandon Montour and Radko Gudas -- plus one member of the team's travel party in the NHL's ***COVID***-19 protocol. By evening, the team announced two more players, Aaron Ekblad and Frank Vatrano, were added to the ***COVID*** list as well.

000 Kings at Panthers DS.jpgA view of the empty FLA Live Arena before the start of an NHL game between the Florida Panthers and Los Angeles Kings on Thursday, Dec. 16, 2021, in Sunrise, Florida. The Panthers were without seven of their main players -- all of whom are in the NHL's ***COVID***-19 protocols. This includes forwards Sam Bennett, Carter Verhaeghe and Ryan Lomberg, defensemen Aaron Ekblad, Radko Gudas and Brandon Montour, plus third-line winger Frank Vatrano.

The Miami Dolphins have six players on the NFL's reserved/***COVID***-19 list -- including each of their top three running backs in Myles Gaskin, Salvon Ahmed and Phillip Lindsay as well as safety Jevon Holland and rookie wide receiver Jaylen Waddle and practice squad running back Gerrid Doaks. The team has won its last five games, and is preparing for a Sunday home game against the New York Jets.

The Dolphins players who have tested positive are quarantining in a hotel. It's unclear if any of them have symptoms, though co-offensive coordinator Eric Studesville said this week that "some feel better than others."

If the ***COVID*** spread is rattling teams' plans for pre-holiday games, the virus also presents a revived worry for family and friends who may have missed last year's festivities out of ***COVID*** fears.

While the 2020 holiday season landed in a ***COVID***-19 uptick as well, vaccinations were largely unavailable to the general public then. For 2021, Miami-Dade is in its 12th month of ***vaccine*** distribution and state statistics report most of the population has vaccinated against the virus.

Early reports of the omicron variant suggest it is more likely to infect a vaccinated person than the delta variant is, but also less likely to result in serious illness. But experts warn it's too early in omicron's existence to be definitive about its risk to people vaccinated against the virus.

Miami-Dade mayor: Eat Christmas dinner outside

At a Thursday press conference, Levine Cava said outdoor meals would be safest during the holidays as the ***COVID*** risk increases.

"Please take your gathering outside into this beautiful weather. Gathering outdoors, we know, reduces the risks significantly of transmission," she said. "Wear your masks around large crowds of people, people you don't know are vaccinated."

Levine Cava said she had no plans to return mandatory ***mask*** rules for county buildings, a restriction she put in place during the surge of the delta variant in July and which she lifted on Nov. 5. Levine Cava urged people to get vaccinated against ***COVID***-19 and to receive booster shots, which research shows is a particularly helpful protection against omicron.

She said Miami-Dade this week launched an outreach operation to bring free booster shots -- as well as first-time vaccinations -- to homebound residents. Anyone interested can call 888-201-5490 or email [*vaccinations@ilshealth.com*](mailto:vaccinations@ilshealth.com)

The extra effort on boosters comes as metrics tracking ***COVID***-19 are rising in Miami-Dade and across Florida.

A spike in ***COVID*** cases at University of Miami

At the University of Miami, which maintains a public dashboard of ***COVID*** cases among students and faculty, the trends show spikes in recent days. There were 77 reported student cases on Wednesday, compared to just one case on Dec. 1. On Thursday night, Jackson Health System announced it would only allow one visitor for patient as the public hospital sees an increase in ***COVID***-19 patient admissions.

Florida on Thursday reported 117 more deaths and 6,381 additional ***COVID***-19 cases to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, according to Miami Herald calculations of CDC data.

This is the largest dump of newly reported cases since September. The CDC backlogs cases and deaths for Florida on Tuesdays and Thursdays, sometimes leading to big increases. All but three of the newly reported deaths -- about 97% -- occurred since Nov. 18, according to the Herald analysis. About 63% of the newly reported have died in the past two weeks, the analysis showed.

Regular ***COVID*** analysis of the county's sewage system has confirmed the presence of omicron, and a sampling of ***COVID*** test results at county testing centers at the start of December also detected the variant.

In Miami-Dade, at least six cases of the omicron variant have been detected. Levine Cava's office confirmed Thursday that five of 373 samples sequenced -- or 1%-- of tests taken around two weeks ago were cases caused by the omicron variant. The rest were lineages of the delta variant.

On Dec. 10, CardioPath, a private lab in Doral, confirmed the county's first case.

The previous positive 746 samples sequenced by Nomi Health, the healthcare company Miami-Dade partnered with for testing, vaccination and sequencing, were all caused by delta lineages. These samples dated back to tests taken since Oct. 31.

Demand for ***COVID*** test spikes ahead of holidays

County testing sites, including Tropical Park, are seeing a spike in demand this week. The head of the Miami-Dade testing operation said that's likely a mix of more people getting sick, as well as rising interest in tests over the holidays, be it as a precaution before traveling to visit family or testing requirements for flying into foreign airports.

MIA\_20211006AD0001VaccineZiA person prepares to be vaccinated at the Miami-Dade County ***COVID***-19 Community-Based Testing & Vaccination Site at Tropical Park on Oct. 6, 2021. Miami-Dade ***COVID*** testing sites have seen a surge of people getting tested for ***COVID*** in mid-December as the holidays approach and the omicron variant spreads.

"We've actually seen a spike in test demand over the last several days. We're adding staff. We're working around the clock," said Ron Goncalves, Florida general manager for Nomi Health, which has the county contract for vaccination and testing sites.

"What was normally a 15-minute wait here has gone up to an hour in some instances," he said from the testing site at Tropical Park, where cars backed up into Bird Road from the park's entrance. "We are working diligently to reduce those wait times."

Miami Herald staff writers Devoun Cetoute, Ana Claudia Chacin, Anthony Chiang, Barry Jackson, Jordan McPherson and Daniel Oyefusi contributed to this report.

**Load-Date:** December 17, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Los Angeles school district approves Carvalho's superintendent contract, $440,000 salary*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:649H-2CW1-JC3J-X552-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

December 14, 2021 Tuesday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** education

**Length:** 391 words

**Byline:**  Sommer Brugal

Miami Herald

**Body**

The Los Angeles Unified School District School Board Tuesday unanimously approved Alberto Carvalho's four-year contract, including an annual salary of $440,000, securing plans for him to be the district's next superintendent, according to the Los Angeles Times.

Carvalho, 57, announced Thursday he was leaving after 14 years as superintendent during a press conference at the school district's headquarters in downtown Miami. He earned around $350,000 as Miami superintendent.

He is expected to begin in March at the nation's second-largest school district, or sooner if able, according to the Times. Miami-Dade is the nation's fourth-largest school district. The LA district has about 450,000 students while Miami-Dade has about 350,000.

"Honestly, I'm excited about this opportunity," Carvalho, who was in LA, told the Times.

The Miami-Dade School Board is set to meet Wednesday where the board will vote on authorizing its chairwoman, Perla Tabares Hantman, to negotiate the terms of Carvalho's departure and begin the process of hiring his successor.

During the pandemic, Carvalho become a well-known public official over his vocal disagreements with Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis over ***mask*** mandates and in-person learning. In August, Miami-Dade Schools mandated masks in schools for all students, faculty and staff, as the delta ***COVID*** variant surged, despite the governor issuing an executive order prohibiting schools from requiring masks.

The move for Carvalho comes more than three years after he rejected an offer to become head of New York City schools and, perhaps more importantly, as school districts across the country weigh how to best address learning loss and mental health concerns that have compounded during the pandemic.

Miami-Dade Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** in a statement Thursday called Carvalho a "visionary leader who led our county's school district with courage and compassion through one of the most challenging times in our history. ... I am certain he will continue to make his mark on the national stage."

"Even though I will be calling Los Angeles home, Miami will always have a special place in my heart," Carvalho said Thursday.

Alberto Carvalho is leaving his position as Miami-Dade County Public Schools SuperintendentAlberto Carvalho is leaving Miami-Dade to become the superintendent of L.A. Unified School District.

**Load-Date:** December 15, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Alberto Carvalho is leaving to become L.A. Unified School District superintendent*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:648F-6K31-JC3J-X40P-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

December 9, 2021 Thursday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** education

**Length:** 2497 words

**Byline:**  David Goodhue, Jimena Tavel, Carli Teproff, Linda Robertson and Michelle Marchante

Miami Herald

**Body**

Miami-Dade County Public Schools Superintendent Alberto Carvalho announced Thursday he is leaving the job he has held for the past 14 years to head the Los Angeles Unified School District in California, the second-largest school district in the country.

Carvalho, 57, has been Miami-Dade superintendent since 2008. He confirmed that he is accepting the job Thursday afternoon during a press conference at the school district's headquarters in downtown Miami.

"Even though I will be calling Los Angeles home, Miami will always have a special place in my heart," Carvalho said.

MIA\_02CARVALHO\_LASuperintendent Alberto Carvalho gathers his thoughts as he announces his departure to become superintendent of the Los Angeles Unified School District, the nation's second-largest district, on Thursday, Dec. 9, 2021. , 2021 ,Miami-Dade Public Schools Superintendent Alberto Carvalho announced his departure for Los Angeles as its new superintendent during his press conference at iPrep Academy in Miami, Florida.

The seven-member Los Angeles Unified Board of Education unanimously approved Carvalho's employment agreement Thursday morning.

"Alberto Carvalho brings the deep experience we need as an educator and leader of a large urban district to manage L.A. Unified's ongoing response and recovery from the ***COVID***-19 pandemic," Board President Kelly Gonez said in a statement.

The Los Angeles district has about 450,000 students and over 1,000 schools. Miami-Dade has about 350,000 students between its about 400 traditional public and charter schools.

Carvalho, whose annual Miami-Dade salary is around $350,000, said he was in contract negotiations with the Los Angeles school district. He did not immediately respond to questions about when his last day of work will be in South Florida.

On Thursday night, the office of Miami-Dade's mayor, ***Daniella Levine Cava***, released a statement from her calling Carvalho a "visionary leader who led our county's school district with courage and compassion through one of the most challenging times in our history. ... I am certain he will continue to make his mark on the national stage."

MIA\_01CARVALHO\_LASuperintendent Alberto Carvalho embraces members of his staff prior to announcing his departure for Los Angeles. On Thursday, Dec. 9, 2021, Miami-Dade County Public Schools Superintendent Alberto Carvalho announced his departure for Los Angeles as its new superintendent during a press conference at iPrep Academy in Miami.

Defying DeSantis over masks in schools

Carvalho, as head of the nation's fourth-largest school district and the state's largest, has become a well-known public official, especially this year as he battled with Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis over ***mask*** mandates.

The governor issued an executive order prohibiting ***mask*** requirements for public school children, but Carvalho implemented one late in the summer as the delta variant of the ***COVID***-19 virus rampaged through the state. At the time, he said he was following the guidance of medical experts convened by the district.

Miami-Dade was among about a dozen districts that defied Tallahassee over masks. In August, a Leon County judge ruled DeSantis and his administration had acted "without legal authority" when they barred universal ***mask*** mandates in schools.

The case is winding its way through the courts, but Miami-Dade eased its ***mask*** policy last month after ***COVID***-19 infections, hospitalizations and deaths significantly fell across the state.

In becoming the Los Angeles superintendent, Carvalho is moving to a state run by a Democratic governor, Gavin Newsom, who, using emergency authority, has imposed a statewide requirement that all students, faculty and staff wear masks indoors at K-12 schools, which a California judge upheld last month.

Newsom also announced in October that California public schools will add the ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** to the list of required vaccines to attend school, the first such state in the nation to do so.

Miami-Dade School Board Vice Chair Steve Gallon III said that with the superintendent's success in Miami-Dade, he's not surprised Carvalho was sought after by other large districts like Los Angeles.

"His selection and acceptance of the superintendent of L.A. Unified School District affirms his decades of service to our district, and will be an asset to the City of Angels," Gallon said.

Aventura Mayor Enid Weisman, who first met Carvalho in 1990 when she was an assistant principal at Miami Jackson Senior High and hired him as a young science teacher, told the Herald in a 2019 profile of Carvalho that he had "chutzpah." (All of 25 and never before in a classroom, he told Weisman then that he wanted to be superintendent.)

"How lucky for the kids in L.A.'' she said Thursday.

Spurning of New York City superintendent's job

This is not the first time Carvalho considered taking another leadership role at a school district in another state.

In February 2018, Carvalho told New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio that he would accept the job as head of the city's school district, only to turn it down during an emergency meeting of the Miami-Dade County School Board. The issue became how much freedom Carvalho would have in picking his staff, in addition to an all-out push by local leaders to keep him here.

105Carvalho02+NEW+PPPSchool Board Members Dr. Dorothy Bendross-Mindingall and Dr. Lawrence S. Feldman listen as Alberto Carvalho, superintendent of the Miami-Dade County Public Schools district, announces his decision to stay in Miami-Dade instead of going to New York City during a full house School Board meeting on Thursday, March 1, 2018.

This time, however, things are different. For one, Carvalho's contract is set to expire in 2023 and the nine-member school board had three new members elected in November 2020: Luisa Santos, Lucia Baez-Geller and Christi Fraga.

And there have been some bumps over the past few years, including an investigation last year by the district's Office of the Inspector General that found that Carvalho's solicitation of a $1.57 million donation -- through his foundation -- from the company that created the district's disastrous online learning platform "created an appearance of impropriety."

The money was to reward teachers for their struggles with learning the platform at the start of the 2020-21 school year.

Carvalho also came under fire last year when an Instagram account surfaced, named "I have a lover," with the handle of @superintendentofmiami. The account, which has since been deleted, featured intimate selfies of Carvalho and accused him of cheating on his wife.

This is the second time during Carvalho's tenure he has been accused of having an affair. On the eve of being named superintendent in 2008, emails surfaced showing love letters written by Tania deLuzuriaga, the Miami Herald's former education reporter, to Carvalho, who was then an associate superintendent. At the time, Carvalho questioned the emails' authenticity but later said his emails were inappropriate.

Carvalho survived these embarrassments and has been recognized locally and nationally for his leadership in education.

Among his awards: National Superintendent of the Year, Florida Superintendent of the Year, National Urban Superintendent of the Year. Under his leadership the district won the 2012 Broad Prize for Education for its academic achievements in Black and Hispanic students, one of the most prestigious prizes in education, which brought more than $500,000 in scholarships to Miami-Dade students.

Carvalho is also credited with turning around a struggling district with a graduation rate of below 60% when he took over as superintendent in 2008 to more than 91% now.

Teachers saddened by the news

The news of his departure struck teachers and parents hard.

"I'm heartbroken," said Teresa Murphy, 2022 Francisco R. Walker Teacher of the Year, and a third-grade teacher at Spanish Lake Elementary School in Hialeah.

MIA\_004TeresaMurphy\_SchoolsTeacherEssayEKMjpgTeresa Murphy, a third-grade teacher at Spanish Lake Elementary School, was the 2022 Miami-Dade County Public Schools Teacher of the Year. Last year, she taught remotely during the entire school year, as she was diagnosed with cancer. This year, she is returning to her classroom to teach. She has not taught from her classroom in 17 months. On Monday, Aug. 9, 2021, she was in her classroom getting ready for the start of the school year.

"What he represents to our county, someone who has struggled to be where he is ... he's just a really good representation of resilience, working hard and opportunity," said Murphy, a 29-year veteran of Miami-Dade Schools.

"I have to be less selfless and be very happy that another group of teachers and students and community leaders are going to be able to reap the benefits of his leadership and that part makes me proud as a teacher," Murphy said. "They're lucky."

Martha Cabrera, admissions director and lead teacher for the visual and performing arts at Coral Reef Senior High School, said Carvalho has "always been a champion for the arts."

"All of the arts have flourished under him," said Cabrera, who is one of Coral Reef's founding members and has been employed by the school district for 34 years.

Whenever Carvalho visited Coral Reef, he made a point to see the kids in visual and performing arts. He wanted to meet the students, talk with them and learn what new creative endeavors they were working on, she said.

Molly Winters Diallo, Miami-Dade County's 2019 Francisco R. Walker Teacher of the Year who is now part of the Bay Harbor Islands Town council, was shocked by the news.

"I still can't believe this is happening," she said. "His empathy really defines his leadership," she added, recalling how during the pandemic Carvalho would hand out food to families.

"His actions match his words and that is what makes him such an extraordinary leader," said Winters Diallo, who is the department chair for social studies and lead mentor for new teachers at Alonzo and Tracy Mourning Senior High in North Miami. "He speaks up for what he believes is right."

IMG\_6045 2.jpegIn November, previous winners of the Miami-Dade Teacher of the Year surprised Alberto Carvalho at an event where he was recognized as one of 'Twelve Good Men' by the Ronald McDonald House.

Parents praise Carvalho for his leadership

Jamie Adams Bonham, who has 11- and 13-year-old boys, said Carvalho leaving is "a loss to the community."

"If you say the name Carvalho, everyone knows who you are talking about," she said. "It's like a brand."

Bonham said her boys -- one is in fifth grade at Treasure Island Elementary in North Bay Village and the other is in seventh grade at Miami Beach Nautilus -- have had "an excellent education experience." She said Carvalho has a "presence" and has represented the district well.

She said the new superintendent has "big shoes to fill." For her, she wants to see a leader who continues to prioritize school safety, communication with parents and teacher pay.

"Knowing that my kids are going to come home safe is the most important thing," she said.

Haydee Polo, a Parent Teacher Students Association officer, had two kids in Miami-Dade public schools and both graduated from Coral Gables High. She praised Carvalho for standing up to DeSantis over masks and being able to manage both the district staff and school board.

"He kept schools open and implemented a ***mask*** mandate in a state with DeSantis as governor. He got the schools bond passed and got the projects going -- not always smoothly. Most importantly, he got the school board under control. Under the previous superintendent, the board was a disaster -- full of infighting and unable to get anything done. That has mostly been suppressed with Carvalho as superintendent."

Marcela Tampied has two children who went to Sunset Elementary, G.W. Carver Middle and Coral Gables High (one graduated, one a freshman). She's also a PTSA officer at Carver and Gables High.

"I'm in shock. He's someone you can rely on. When Ron DeSantis said he was going to cut funds or salary for those who imposed a ***mask*** mandate, Carvalho showed more respect for our kids than the governor," Tampied said. "He will be missed. My only hope is his replacement won't be a politicized choice."

The president of Florida International University, Mark Rosenberg, said Carvalho's pending departure is Los Angeles' gain and Miami's loss.

"I am saddened that the superintendent is leaving," he said. "We are losing one of the finest public servants that we have seen in the 305 in decades."

Carvalho's rise from immigrant to educator

Carvalho came to the United States from Portugal alone at the age of 17. He was the first in his family to graduate from high school. He described Thursday how he worked his way up through the system, with his first job when he came to the States as a dishwasher and his second as a day laborer.

After graduating from Barry University, he became a science teacher in the Dade school system, then ascending through the ranks to assistant principal to superintendent of one of the country's largest school districts.

When he took over from former Miami-Dade Superintendent Rudy Crew, whom the school board fired, he said the district was in "financial bankruptcy" and "academic bankruptcy" with dozens of schools receiving D and F ratings from the state.

Under his leadership, that changed, although hardships seemed to come one after the other, starting with the Great Recession of 2008, the federal government threatening undocumented students and their families, hurricanes like 2017's Irma and finally, the ***COVID***-19 pandemic.

"In the process, we elevated this school district to the highest possible level in this country today, widely seen as the highest-performing urban school district in America, with zero D- or F-rated schools," Carvalho said.

Replacement process not yet determined

The school board has not determined the process to choose Carvalho's successor.

Karla Hernandez-Mats, president of United Teachers of Dade, said the new superintendent should "come from our education community and be knowledgeable of our culture and needs."

"We do not want our hard-earned achievements to be dismantled by opportunists with a political agenda," Hernandez-Mats said. "Our next leader must exhibit the same upbeat, working relationship with the various unions and all stakeholders that will continue to inspire our teachers and students."

Weisman, the Aventura mayor, said of the transition: "We need to know a little more about how the board is planning on moving forward."

She said, though, the process could be seamless.

"He's not leaving the district in the disarray and distress he found it in," she said, adding that the district is in good financial and academic standing. "All of the things that he's accomplished makes it easier for the next administration because they are not having to start out with disasters."

Miami Herald Staff Writer Douglas Hanks and Miami Herald research director Monika Leal contributed to this report.

**Load-Date:** December 10, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Miami International Airport will keep price protections after mayor reverses course*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:646R-F0B1-DYJM-M0J5-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

December 1, 2021 Wednesday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** miami\_dade

**Length:** 641 words

**Byline:**  Douglas Hanks

Miami Herald

**Body**

Miami International Airport will retain price controls after Miami-Dade County leaders reversed course on a request by retailers and restaurants to lift the consumer protections in exchange for paying workers higher wages.

Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava***, who earlier this year proposed ending the long-standing price caps as part of a ***COVID***-19 relief package, told commissioners her administration wrongly believed MIA was unusual in limiting the prices tenants could charge travelers above what's charged outside the airport.

In fact, most airports have such controls, the Miami Herald reported Tuesday, a week after a top Levine Cava aide told the board MIA was "one of the few airports in the country" with the rules.

"The previous leadership of the airport had negotiated that part of the deal, [and] advised the administration at the time that competitive pricing was not common," Levine Cava told commissioners, adding the county has since learned that wasn't the case. "Based on this new information, we are recommending maintaining competitive pricing."

The retention of the pricing rules, which cap airport premiums at between 10% and 15% of what travelers would pay elsewhere in Miami, was approved Wednesday as part of a broad extension of retail and restaurant leases at MIA.

A commission committee had previously approved dropping price controls, and Chairman Jose "Pepe" Diaz told Levine Cava he also mistakenly believed Miami was one of the few airports with that kind of consumer protection.

Commissioners approved no-bid extensions of between four and six years. Duty Free stores reliant on the still-lagging international market get the most time and tenants with month-to-month leases well past their original expiration dates get the least. The extensions were longer than Levine Cava's proposal, which capped extensions at four years.

Commissioners René Garcia, Keon Hardemon, Joe Martinez and Rebeca Sosa voted against the main lease-extension package for most MIA tenants, calling it too generous for businesses that have already gone years without having to bid on their airport locations.

"I think four years is too rich," said Hardemon, chair of the commission's Airport and Economic Development Committee. "For those that had month-to-month [leases], it's downright decadent."

The deals are the latest in a string of no-bid extensions for major retailers at the county-owned airport, a small industry populated by some reliable donors in county races. Some existing tenants last bid on their locations more than 15 and 20 years ago.

Tenants pushed for more time on their leases in 2021 as a way to regain profits lost during the near ***shutdown*** of the airport at the start of the ***COVID***-19 pandemic in March 2020, and accelerate reopening of some locations still shuttered at an airport nearing past peaks in terms of traffic.

In exchange for the longer lease terms and an end to price controls, MIA tenants agreed to immediately implement the airport's existing living-wage rules, which only kick in once leases are renewed. Unions have pushed for expanding the county's $17-an-hour living wage throughout the airport.

The new agreements include short-term rent reductions for airport tenants. The ending of price controls was also pitched as financial relief, since it would allow for higher prices as MIA worker wages increase from Florida's minimum wage of $10.

Airport tenants generated about $450 million in sales in 2019, and those revenues are down about 50% as air traffic nears pre-pandemic levels. Tenants said that while overall traffic is looking better, MIA still lacks the normal flow of heavy-spending international travelers.

"The mayor insisted we go to a living wage," Newslink owner Chris Korge told commissioners. "We're raising our wages and benefits by 40%. How do you think we're going to pay for this?"

**Load-Date:** December 2, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Miami-Dade drops vaccination requirement for new employees after new Florida law bans it*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:644T-PC41-JC3J-X22W-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

November 22, 2021 Monday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** miami\_dade

**Length:** 303 words

**Byline:**  Douglas Hanks

Miami Herald

**Body**

Miami-Dade County's vaccination requirement for new police, firefighters, bus operators and other county employees lasted roughly four months -- ended by a Republican-backed bill barring local governments from requiring inoculation against ***COVID***-19 as a condition of employment.

Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** announced the ending of the ***vaccine*** requirement in a memo to department directors Monday night.

The Democrat in a nonpartisan post cited the law passed by Florida's Republican-controlled Legislature and signed by Gov. Ron DeSantis, a Republican. In the memo, Levine Cava said House Bill 1B "prevents local leaders from making responsible decisions to protect the workforce and broader community."

Levine Cava announced the hiring requirements in August, along with testing rules for non-unionized county employees that can be waived if a worker has proof of ***COVID***-19 inoculation.

That type of test-or-vaccinate requirement wasn't preempted by the legislation passed in a special session called by DeSantis. The ban on ***vaccine*** requirements for new hires applies to local governments in Florida, not to private employers.

While Levine Cava promoted the test-or-vaccinate policy as something she wanted to impose across the county's 29,000-person workforce, she made the rules part of union negotiations over the summer and fall. No union accepted the requirements, leaving about 15% of the payroll covered. Of those, about 85% opted out with proof of vaccination, according to county figures.

Rules for new hires covered nearly 260 people offered jobs between Levine Cava's Aug. 5 announcement of the vaccination requirement and mid-October, according to the most recently available county statistics. Of those, 7% declined their offers over the vaccination requirement, according the county's Human Resources Department.

**Load-Date:** November 23, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Masks no longer required in Miami-Dade County government buildings, mayor announces*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6416-1RD1-JC3J-X211-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

November 5, 2021 Friday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** coronavirus

**Length:** 193 words

**Byline:**  Devoun Cetoute

Miami Herald

**Body**

Masks will no longer be required in Miami-Dade County government buildings, Miami-Dade Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** said Friday.

In a tweet about the reversal, Levine Cava said it is due to "enormous progress we have made against the Delta variant, and in consultation with our Chief Medical Officer."

Levine Cava had reinstated the ***mask*** mandate in July and urged businesses to do the same due to a spike in ***COVID*** cases and deaths, which was later recognized as Florida's third wave.

***mask*** tweet

Another factor in the change, Levine Cava said, was that Miami-Dade's seven-day ***COVID*** positivity has stayed at or near 2%. She also said hospitalizations have "sharply declined."

While positivity has stayed low, ***COVID*** hospitalizations have fluctuated between about 250 and 150 patients in the past two weeks, according to Thursday's Miami-Dade County ***COVID*** Dashboard report.

Masks will still be federally mandated on all public transportation, at Miami International Airport and PortMiami.

"We know this pandemic is not over and that we must remain vigilant," Levine Cava said.

She also urged residents to get vaccinated, including getting a booster if they are eligible.

**Load-Date:** November 9, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*The pandemic isn't over, and neither is the toll it's taking on domestic-violence victims | Opinion*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:640M-RP31-DYJM-M2KN-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

November 3, 2021 Wednesday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** op\_ed

**Length:** 630 words

**Byline:**  Alex R. Piquero

Miami Herald

**Body**

"The most vicious of all crimes are domestic crimes." President Joe Biden said that in 2009 when he was vice president. Twelve years later,domestic violence remains a significant problem.

A recent study that I led on behalf of the Council on Criminal Justice, using data from multiple cities in the United States and around the world, concluded that domestic-violence incidents increased by at least 8% after ***stay-at-home*** orders were put into place to curtail the spread of the coronavirus.

A recent nationwide analysis found that, compared to 2019, gun homicides involving intimate partners rose 25% -- the highest level in almost 30 years, with women representing more than two-thirds of those killed. Here in Miami, our study also detected some evidence for a spike in domestic violence arrests following ***COVID***-19 ***stay-at-home*** orders.

Yet, it is likely that this estimate is a floor and not a ceiling, given that so many incidents of domestic violence are not reported to authorities or, even if reported, not taken seriously. The amount of violence, including emotional violence, exposure to violence, child abuse -- and even animal abuse -- that has occurred during the pandemic, and as we make our way out of it, is undoubtedly quite high.

Fortunately, President Biden allocated $200 million from the American Rescue Plan to support services to domestic-violence survivors as well as provide supplemental grants to fund domestic-violence services, coalitions, national resources centers and domestic violence hotlines. This is important, but it's just a start.

The 1994 Violence Against Women Act, which Biden helped lead when he was a senator, focused squarely on ending domestic violence. Earlier this year, the House voted to renew the act, which came with additional provisions. It has been in the Senate for some time, but its path to passing remains partly to mostly cloudy.

Every single elected leader should support this legislation and provide the resources necessary to survivors of domestic abuse. Fortunately, the residents of Miami and Miami-Dade County have mayors -- Francis Suarez and, especially, ***Daniella Levine-Cava***, respectively -- who have long been a champions of this issue, working in lock-step with the Miami-Dade County Domestic Violence Oversight Board and local agencies such as Lotus House, The Women's Fund and Camillus House to help domestic violence survivors.

Aside from the federal response, going forward, several additional policy options such as police doing welfare checks on domestic violence survivors; scaling up funding for domestic-violence shelters; and the introduction of apps for cellphones to provide more immediate assistance, there are also opportunities to prevent domestic violence in the future by ensuring that young people do not think it is acceptable to abuse their significant others -- or anyone else.

The coronavirus is not just a health pandemic. It has created several pandemics within it. Children lost out on the importance of in-class instruction, developing social skills through interactions, and of course, all the extracurricular activities associated with the educational experience. Businesses lost employees. People everywhere lost their previous "normals" of going to the gym, the movies, concerts and traveling.

But we must not lose sight of the countless number of domestic-violence victims that the pandemic has created. Their suffering, at home and in the workplace, will resonated for them and their families for quite some time. With all that captures our attention, we should not ignore this glaring problem.

This is an everyday issue -- for every single one of us.

Alex R. Piquero is chair of the Department of Sociology & Criminology and Arts & Sciences Distinguished Scholar at the University of Miami.

**Load-Date:** November 3, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Republicans are all about workers' rights in vaccine fight against Biden. How ironic | Editorial*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:640R-F0Y1-JC3J-X3XM-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

November 3, 2021 Wednesday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** editorials

**Length:** 513 words

**Byline:**  the Miami Herald Editorial Board

Miami Herald

**Body**

Republicans in Congress and state legislatures have spent the past decade gutting workers' unions, refusing to pass laws to protect LGBTQ employees from workplace discrimination and denying working-class Americans higher minimum wages.

So we were surprised when a group of eight Florida Republicans called a news conference outside the U.S. Capitol last week to proudly take a stance for workers -- well, the unvaccinated ones -- targeted by President BIden's upcoming ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** mandates for federal employees and contractors and large private businesses.

They weren't perhaps as proud as they were to stand behind the new standard bearer for the GOP and anti-vaxxers, Gov. Ron DeSantis, who's suing the Biden administration.

Those Republicans' true intention was to stick it to what they described as Biden's tyrannical socialist intervention -- even though ***vaccine*** mandates have been part of American life for over a century and have been upheld in court many times. Perhaps their point wasn't to support workers' rights, but it was nice to see them for once take such stance.

We didn't miss the irony that Republicans and some unions are in lockstep on the issue of employer mandates. These are strange bedfellows considering how the Trump administration gave directives to restrict the role of unions in federal agencies.

The unions representing Miami-Dade County's public employees have rejected Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava***'s request to add to their contracts a requirement that unvaccinated employees get tested for ***COVID***-19 or show proof of vaccination, the Herald reported. In liberal New York, unions representing teachers and municipal workers sued the city over its public-school mandate.

Perhaps congressional Republicans' next step will be to strengthen unions to help them fight government intrusion and "woke socialist corporations" -- Isn't that the oxymoron of the year? Not in a million years, considering the GOP's dislike for organized labor, which they also like to call socialist.

Or they could finally pass the 2021 Equality Act, which would protect LGBTQ workers from discrimination in several areas, including employment. After all, if it's none of your boss' business whether you received a ***COVID vaccine***, it shouldn't be their business to care about your sexual orientation or identity.

The U.S. House passed the bill largely along party lines in February, with the Republicans who attended the Oct. 28 news conference voting against it, including Miami-Dade's Carlos Gimenez and Mario Diaz-Balart. The bill now sits in the U.S. Senate, where it's unlikely to garner enough GOP votes to become law.

Many Republicans opposed the Equality Act's trumping of a freedom-of-religion law. OK, we get it. There are other ways to support workers during the pandemic. They are not only battling ***vaccine*** mandates, but also a lack of affordable childcare and guaranteed parental and sick leave. The GOP could get behind some of these reforms.

But our gut tells us we won't see Republicans and the interests of the working class align again for a very long time.

**Load-Date:** November 3, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*In Miami-Dade, predominantly Black and low-income ZIP codes are still behind on vaccination*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:63YY-HVB1-JC3J-X0XW-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

October 31, 2021 Sunday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** coronavirus

**Length:** 945 words

**Byline:**  Ana Claudia Chacin and Daniel Chang

Miami Herald

**Body**

Despite flaws in the Florida Department of Health's reporting of vaccination rates for each of the 80 ZIP codes in Miami-Dade, a Miami Herald and el Nuevo Herald analysis of the data reveals trends that suggest areas with predominantly Black and low-income residents are falling behind on vaccination against ***COVID***-19.

In the nine Miami-Dade ZIP codes where more than half of residents describe themselves as non-Hispanic Black, the average vaccination rate was just 48% of the population as of Friday. Only one of the nine ZIP codes had more than 50% of their population fully vaccinated.

Miami-Dade's ***COVID***-19 vaccination rate is the highest in Florida. Hardly anyone believes it

Because the health department's data includes vaccination rates higher than 100% in some ZIP codes, the Herald, in consultation with experts, adjusted the percentages in ZIP codes where the number of people vaccinated exceeded the eligible population.

For those ZIP codes, the Herald changed the number of people vaccinated to the highest possible number -- the total population eligible for the ***vaccine***, those 12 and older, in each ZIP code.

The county rates cited in this story reflect the Herald's adjusted data. However, the discrepancies noted in the story are evident whether the data was adjusted or not, though they are narrower using the adjusted figures. Of the 23 ZIP codes with vaccination rates exceeding 100%, only two had a poverty rate higher than the county average of about 17%.

See how we got the numbers

Mary Jo Trepka, an infectious disease epidemiologist with Florida International University who has analyzed the health department's data, said she suspects many of the ZIP codes with vaccination rates over 100% are likely due to "snowbirds" and wealthy tourists who stay in Miami-Dade's wealthy areas.

The numbers also suggest that many of Miami-Dade's low-income residents are not getting vaccinated.

MIA\_Overtown\_Vaccinations\_M (6)The walk-up vaccination clinic, when it was brand new, in Miami's Overtown neighborhood.Un nuevo sitio de vacunación ***COVID***-19 sin cita previa está en funcionamiento en el vecindario Overtown de Miami el martes 2 de marzo de 2021.

In the 27 ZIP codes where the share of residents living in poverty exceeds the county average, 23 had a fully vaccinated rate below the county median of almost 67%.

Miami-Dade's vaccination rate also shows a dividing line by race.

Among the 10 ZIP codes with the lowest vaccination rates in the county, six are majority Black, and two are more than 35% Black. Eight of those 10 ZIP codes have a higher share of residents living in poverty than the county average.

MD\_Vax\_2zips\_Vaxrate\_OCT

Miami-Dade Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** said her administration has increased outreach to under-vaccinated areas of the county through door-to-door canvassing, educational forums and a paid media campaign.

Miami-Dade's VaxNow program reports that canvassers have visited nearly 300,000 households to distribute information and encourage testing, vaccination and prevention.

The county has also opened 24-hour vaccination sites, Levine Cava said, and made it easier for residents to get vaccinated.

"We're looking for no excuses," she said. "We're looking for things that reduce barriers to participation."

Trepka, the FIU epidemiologist, said the data clearly show that the county should focus on vaccinating younger people. According to the raw data provided by DOH, kids 12 through 17 make up the age group with the lowest vaccination rate in Miami-Dade.

"They're clearly the group that is not only under-vaccinated, but is also the group that is interacting with a lot of other people and can spread the virus pretty efficiently," Trepka said.

The Herald was unable to adjust the data by age because that information was not provided by ZIP code.

Dr. Kunjana Mavunda, a pediatric pulmonologist practicing in Miami and a former director of the state health department's division of epidemiology and disease control, said the county has provided "adequate" access to ***COVID***-19 vaccines in predominantly minority neighborhoods.

But many choose not to get vaccinated, Mavunda said, because of a broad distrust in the healthcare system, the government or what's inside the shots.

"A lot of my patients are preemies and very vulnerable babies from poorer backgrounds," said Mavunda, a physician with KIDZ Medical Services, a group of pediatric specialists, "and it just bothers me how many parents have chosen not to get the ***vaccine***. I offer the ***vaccine*** in the office."

Mavunda said many receive news from social media or by word of mouth in their neighborhoods, and that the information can often be misleading if not false.

"Some of the things they think about the ***vaccine*** are totally false, but you just can't make them understand," she said.

Levine Cava said her administration has targeted its outreach at communities that are not getting vaccinated, but that it takes a trusted messenger to close the deal for many who remain unconvinced.

On Oct. 21, she visited Dukunoo Jamaican Kitchen, a restaurant at 316 NW 24th St., in one of Miami-Dade's least vaccinated ZIP codes, 33127, and announced a new program, in partnership with local Chambers of Commerce, calling on small business owners to encourage their employees to get vaccinated.

Levine Cava said she didn't choose the location for the announcement, but that her staff likely selected the neighborhood "based on essentially ***vaccine*** hesitancy and wanting to be sure that populations that might be holding back are addressed directly.

"People want to see people like them getting vaccinated," she said.

Miami Herald investigative reporter Sarah Blaskey contributed to this report.

**Load-Date:** April 16, 2022

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Miami-Dade's COVID-19 vaccination rate is very high. Here's why you might be skeptical*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:63YY-HVB1-JC3J-X0Y6-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

October 31, 2021 Sunday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** coronavirus

**Length:** 2639 words

**Byline:**  Daniel Chang and Ana Claudia Chacin

Miami Herald

**Body**

No Florida county is as well-protected against ***COVID***-19 as Miami-Dade, where 94% of residents 12 and older had received at least one dose of ***vaccine*** as of Oct. 28.

At least that's the percentage the state health department tells the public.

Behind the scenes, the agency collects ***vaccine*** rates for each of Miami-Dade's 80 ZIP codes and distributes the information to local officials for pandemic response planning.

But a Miami Herald and el Nuevo Herald analysis of the Florida Department of Health's ZIP code data for Miami-Dade suggests that the state-reported rate is exaggerated.

As of Friday, 24 Miami-Dade ZIP codes logged a mathematically impossible vaccination rate of greater than 100% of eligible residents (those over 12) who have received at least one dose, according to the Herald's analysis, which combined population estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau with the health department's vaccination data for the county.

The Herald's reporting supports what many already suspect about Miami-Dade's overall vaccination rate: that it is likely inflated, distorted by the many people who move through the region, as visitors or migrants or "***vaccine*** tourists," and avail themselves of Florida's open-door policy that anyone who has a reason to be in the state can get the jab.

Map\_inflatedZIPs\_oct

The vaccination rate is more than just another skewed ***COVID***-19 data point. Florida gathers and shares the data to help guide pandemic response planning -- a purpose for which some local officials say the information is useless. It's also a talking point in arguments that go: "X percent of people got vaccinated and still the virus is spreading. So how effective really is the ***vaccine***?"

"The ***vaccine*** rates have become meaningless, certainly in our county," said Dan Gelber, Miami Beach mayor. "They've become wholly unreliable, and anybody who is celebrating our vaccination rate is making a mistake."

015 SOUTH BEACH ***VACCINE*** POPUP DS.jpgIn early May, a dose of the single-shot Johnson & Johnson ***vaccine*** is administered at a pop-up vaccination site located at 16th Street and the beach in Miami Beach.

Weesam Khoury, communications director for the health department, refused to answer questions about the agency's ZIP code data for Miami-Dade.

"These data are for response planning purposes only," she said in an email of the ZIP code breakdown, "and are considered confidential and exempt from public disclosure."

County and city officials are supposed to use the data to assess vaccination patterns, identify pockets where vaccines aren't being used, and direct resources to vulnerable communities.

But Miami-Dade Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** said her administration wants more information than the health department has been providing.

"We know that the Department of Health, which is our partner, isn't always tracking as much as we would like," Levine Cava said. "We would like to have more robust state reporting just in general. So we've done what we can at the local level to complement the state data."

No valid address

The Herald found that although healthcare providers are required by law to report vaccination data to Florida's health department within 24 hours of administering a dose -- including the name, address, age, gender and race of individuals who received a shot -- one of Miami-Dade's biggest ***vaccine*** providers said it could not validate the local addresses reported by people who used a passport as ID.

That provider, NOMI Health, said vaccination sites at Miami International Airport and Dolphin Mall in Sweetwater saw a jump in people using passports as ID in June, after Florida opened ***vaccine*** eligibility to anyone who had a reason to be in the state.

The health department's data suggest that in ZIP code 33122, where Miami International Airport is located, about 3,866% of eligible residents -- or 6,263 people -- have received at least one dose. Only 162 people who reside in that ZIP code are eligible.

There are 24 Miami-Dade ZIP codes where the share of eligible residents who have received at least one dose reportedly exceeds 100%. A smaller number of ZIP codes -- 17 in Miami-Dade -- have a fully vaccinated rate that is higher than 100% of the eligible population, according to the health department's data.

See how we got the numbers

For those ZIP codes, the Herald, in consultation with experts, adjusted the data to the highest possible rate -- the total population eligible for the ***vaccine*** (those 12 and older) in each ZIP code. Doing so capped the rate in those 17 ZIP codes at 100% of the eligible population.

Jason Salemi, an epidemiologist with the University of South Florida, said that while this method does not account for population underestimates and assumes every eligible resident has been vaccinated, it's still a sensible way to suggest a vaccination rate closer to reality.

The Herald's approach "makes sense as a simple strategy to adjust," Salemi said.

To calculate the Miami-Dade vaccination rate, the health department divides the total number of people vaccinated by the county's eligible population. The total number of people vaccinated in the agency's calculation includes all those who reported a valid Miami-Dade ZIP code plus others whose ZIP code was "unknown or not Miami-Dade County's ZIP code," said Olga Connor, a health department spokeswoman, by email in April.

MIA\_HARD\_ROCK\_DAV26.JPGMotorists line up for the ***vaccine*** at Hard Rock Stadium in Miami Gardens, Florida, on Monday, April 12, 2021.

Connor would not clarify the statement when asked to by the Herald in October. But the agency's method, which includes 27,401 individuals who are not associated with a Miami-Dade ZIP code, produces a fully vaccinated rate -- meaning two doses of the Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna ***vaccine*** or one of the Johnson & Johnson -- of 82% of Miami-Dade residents 12 and older, which is likely an overestimate.

The Herald's method -- which considers only individuals with a known Miami-Dade ZIP code -- suggests that about 78% of eligible residents are fully vaccinated.

The county's overall vaccination rate, including children not eligible for the vaccines but who can still transmit the disease, is closer to 68%, according to the Herald's calculations. The health department does not publish a fully vaccinated rate for Miami-Dade, neither by eligible age nor by total population.

A rise in passports for ID

Though the department considers the ZIP code data confidential, the Herald obtained copies through local officials who receive the information once a week. The data include a warning -- "It can ONLY be used for public health planning" -- and a disclaimer explaining that self-reported information and population underestimates may cause errors in some ZIP code rates.

The Herald had been receiving the data each week from Miami-Dade emergency management officials since April. But in October, after reporters asked the Department of Health about the data, county officials stopped providing the reports, citing an email from the local health department reiterating that the information is confidential and exempt from public disclosure.

Khoury, the state health department spokeswoman, refused to say what percentage of Miami-Dade's fully vaccinated residents have a valid ZIP code of residence. Khoury said the health department works to correct errors in the data, but that ***vaccine*** providers are required to verify the address of everyone who receives a shot.

"If an individual traveled to Miami-Dade County and was vaccinated, vaccination providers have the responsibility to ensure accurate residential data are recorded," Khoury said in an email. "However, when possible, in cases where location of vaccination is recorded rather than location of residence, the department works to allocate that data to the appropriate county or state."

NOMI Health, a Utah-based company, operates testing and vaccination sites at Tropical Park, Dolphin Mall, Miami International Airport and other locations under contract with Miami-Dade. NOMI also received two contracts worth $46 million from Florida to run ***COVID***-19 testing and ***vaccine*** sites throughout the state from February through June.

Though workers check photo identification to confirm an individual's identity when getting vaccinated, NOMI said they had no way of validating the residency of many who received a shot at Miami International Airport and Dolphin Mall.

"Once eligibility in the state was expanded to include anyone who had reason to be in Florida, we saw a significant jump in passports as IDs with no way to validate the self-reported address," Ron Goncalves, general manager of Florida operations for NOMI, said in a prepared statement. "Many of those people used the ZIP code of the venue [if known] -- we saw a similar trend at Dolphin Mall, another site that saw a higher proportion of international patients."

NOMI Health partnered with Miami-Dade to host pop-up clinics at the airport's Terminal D and a bus stop and taxi waiting area just outside the terminal during two weeks in May and June. The company reported administering nearly 5,000 doses of the Pfizer ***vaccine*** at the pop-up clinics.

It's not clear how many people have used passports as ID when getting vaccinated, but the health department analyzes the ***vaccine*** data submitted by providers such as NOMI Health and checks the addresses and ZIP codes to ensure they are counted in the appropriate county, Khoury said.

Khoury emphasized that the vaccination rate data are "provisional" and will "continue to be quality checked" by the agency.

'A big question'

Like other states, Florida's ***vaccine*** data originate with the doctors, nurses, pharmacists, paramedics and other healthcare professionals who administer the shots. The information they gather on individuals who receive a ***vaccine*** is uploaded to the state's immunization database, called FloridaSHOTS.

But just because the data are collected in a state database does not mean that biostatisticians, epidemiologists and other public health experts know what it means yet.

Vaccinesoutreach.JPGUniversity of Miami health personnel vaccinate a couple against ***COVID***-19 during a Farmworker Health Fair held at the Florida Farm Workers Association in Homestead, on Saturday, March 27, 2021.

For academic researchers whose job it is to analyze such data and use the numbers to help government agencies control the pandemic, Miami-Dade's reported vaccination rate by ZIP code is puzzling.

"There's a big question here about why, exactly, are some of those numbers as far off as they are," said Thomas Hladish, a researcher and disease modeler with the University of Florida's Emerging Pathogens Institute, who reviewed the county vaccination data at the Herald's request.

Hladish said the data probably reflects a number of people from outside Miami-Dade who are getting vaccinated in the county.

Elena Cyrus, an infectious disease epidemiologist with the University of Central Florida who lives in Miami, said the dynamics of Florida, and particularly Miami-Dade, make it challenging to report perfect vaccination data.

South Florida is a travel and immigration destination and a transit hub to Latin America and the Caribbean, Cyrus said, and many who immigrate to Miami-Dade may stay temporarily before moving elsewhere or returning home.

Many local residents are also foreign born and may have relatives from outside the United States whom they may host for limited periods, she said.

MIA\_03VACCINEZIP\_CPJLoreen Chant, president and CEO of the Health Foundation of South Florida, center, announces an initiative to encourage ***COVID***-19 vaccinations at Dukunoo Jamaican Kitchen in Wynwood. on Oct. 21, 2021.

Those dynamics impact more than vaccination rates, Cyrus said. They affect all of the ***COVID***-19 data collected and reported for Miami-Dade.

"In some sense, you see infection rates and prevalence and incidence are just as inflated as the vaccination rates," she said, "because you expect that same migratory population to have the same sort of effect."

Cyrus said South Florida's migratory dynamics can even affect our assessment of ***COVID***-19 deaths -- considered the most accurate data on the pandemic. When an individual tests positive for the disease in Florida and then returns to their home country and doesn't survive, that death escapes detection.

"They call it 'statistical immortality'," Cyrus said. "That's a mortality that's lost in our system and we don't know how to code it."

Cyrus said public health experts do not expect pandemic data to be crystal clear yet. That will take time. At best, she said, the data may help policy makers identify trends.

"Think of a man walking with a blindfold, which is what we were at the beginning of the pandemic, and slowly it's being lifted," Cyrus said. "You have some visibility but not all of it. That will come with trying a few years down the line."

'We Did it:' Small business ***vaccine*** initiative launches in Miami-DadeThe Health Foundation of South Florida partnered with Miami-Dade County, the Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce and the Coalition of Miami-Dade Chambers of Commerce to encourage ***COVID***-19 vaccinations in small businesses through a new initiative.

'Everyone around me is clear'

Local public officials want the data to inform their ***COVID***-19 response policies today, not months or years from now, and they say the information creates a false sense of security instead.

Gelber, the Miami Beach mayor, said he used to report the vaccination rate for the city's three ZIP codes each week via a pre-recorded video addressed to residents. But Gelber said he stopped relaying the vaccination rate weeks ago because he thought that it was sending the wrong message.

"If people saw the number of unvaccinated was high, maybe they would urge family and coworkers to get vaccinated," he said. "But when they see a 90% vaccination rate, they think 'I can go do anything because everyone around me is clear'."

Miami-Dade's mayor, Levine Cava, said anyone who feels they can skip getting vaccinated based on the county's high vaccination rate is missing the bigger picture. The county is still reporting about 2,100 confirmed cases a week, and as of Oct. 28 there were still about 240 ***COVID***-positive inpatients in Miami-Dade hospitals.

"It doesn't tell us anything really meaningful in terms of an individual risk," she said of the vaccination rate.

Those who are working to stem the spread of the virus by getting shots in arms also don't have time to wait for experts to understand the data, said Hladish, the UF research scientist.

***Vaccine*** drives prioritize the number of people inoculated not perfection in data gathering -- although practices probably vary from a pharmacy to a FEMA site to a temporary kiosk at the airport.

"It's not really supposed to be totally up to the discretion of the person with the syringe in their hand, but it often is," Hladish said. "This is something they feel quite passionate about, and they want to get as many people vaccinated as possible."

That's the correct approach for public health workers and policy makers, said Mary Jo Trepka, an epidemiologist with Florida International University who has reviewed the health department's vaccination data for Miami-Dade

Trepka said she also believes the health department's vaccination rates for Miami-Dade are "improbable, particularly because they're quite a bit higher than Broward and Palm Beach County, and I have no reason to think they should be that much higher."

But, she said, "How are you going to fix it? If we have an international traveler here, what are we going to do about that? It's good that they're vaccinated. Or a snowbird. It's a great thing they got vaccinated."

Who can get Pfizer's ***COVID*** booster? What to knowThe federal government has authorized Pfizer's ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** booster to be given to certain high-risk groups at least six months after being fully vaccinated.

**Load-Date:** April 16, 2022

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Miami-Dade mayor's vaccine plan hitting a wall in labor talks as county unions say no*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:63YB-8621-DYJM-M0SF-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

October 28, 2021 Thursday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** miami\_dade

**Length:** 849 words

**Byline:**  Douglas Hanks

Miami Herald

**Body**

In August, Miami-Dade Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** announced ***COVID***-19 testing requirements for un-vaccinated county workers and said the requirements would start with non-union employees.

Two months later, it appears the test-or-vaccinate plan will stop with non-union employees as well.

No county union has accepted Levine Cava's request to add the testing rules to new three-year contracts being negotiated by her administration, leaving about 90% of Miam-Dade's 29,000 county workers untouched by the initiative.

"A lot of folks are still uneasy," said Se'Adoria Brown, president of the AFSCME Local 199 union, which represents county workers at Parks and Recreation, PortMiami and other agencies. "They want to at least have the choice to decide whether they get vaccinated."

Brown said the union is reluctant to agree to a ***COVID***-19 testing rule that would trigger termination if an employee refused to comply. "It's a difficult thing for any bargaining unit," Brown said. "Not because we're 100% opposed to it. I understand what the mayor is trying to do."

AFSCME 199 hasn't taken a formal position on the request for mandated ***COVID***-19 tests as negotiations continue with the Levine Cava administration on the union's three-year contract. But none of the county's six finalized union agreements include the mandates, and AFSCME 199 and the three other unions still in negotiations haven't agreed to the required testing, either.

That's left Levine Cava to consider imposing the rules outside of the labor contracts, or accept the limited scope of a vaccination effort as ***COVID*** cases approach previous lows set at the start of the summer.

"We're very pleased with how this has rolled out. We have a very high compliance rate. We haven't had to let anyone go who is subject to this policy. People are complying," she said Wednesday of the roughly 3,000 county workers covered by the testing rules because they're not represented by unions.

"We definitely want our employees to be vaccinated," Levine Cava said. "We're exploring every option."

Miami-Dade doesn't track vaccination rates among employees. For the 2,500 non-union workers covered by the Levine Cava rules, 85% opted out of testing by providing proof of vaccination, said Rachel Johnson, communications director for the county.

Levine Cava's Aug. 5 announcement of the test-or-vaccinate rules fell short of the more aggressive policy adopted in Orange County, which requires its workers to be vaccinated or face termination. That rule drew fire from Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, who warned Orange County Mayor Jerry Demings of fines and legal action based on a new state law restricting vaccination requirements.

County and city governments in Florida wouldn't be covered by the federal workplace rules proposed by the Biden administration requiring ***COVID***-19 vaccines for employers with more than 100 workers. Orange County firefighters are suing to overturn the ***vaccine*** mandate there, and the city of Gainesville rescinded its vaccination mandate after a similar warning from the DeSantis administration.

Miami-Dade hasn't received warnings over its test-or-vaccinate rules, or a stricter requirement for new hires. In addition to the rules for county workers announced in August, Levine Cava imposed a hiring requirement that new employees be vaccinated for ***COVID***-19.

Because job applicants and new hires aren't covered by union rules, the requirement applies across all county departments regardless of what's in the bargaining agreements.

According to statistics provided by the county's Human Resources Department, 259 employees have been hired between Sept. 1 and Oct. 15, all of them covered by the vaccination requirement. Of those, 19 applicants declined a job offer over the ***vaccine*** requirement -- representing about 7% of the pool.

Jeffery Mitchell, president of the Transportation Workers Union Local 291 in Miami-Dade, said he supported test-or-vaccinate rules but didn't think the administration needed to make them part of the labor talks.

"There's not an issue with it, but we don't feel a need to put it in our labor contract," said Mitchell, who said 20 of his union members died of ***COVID***-19 during the pandemic. He also contracted the virus at work. "We support the idea," he said.

Mark Richard, a Miami labor lawyer representing multiple county unions, said mayors and corporate executives haven't been required to go to labor unions for agreements on ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** rules.

"The courts have clearly given employers in the public and private sectors the general right to have ***vaccine*** mandates for the safety of the workforce," he said.

The two unions representing Miami-Dade police officers and supervisors agreed to final terms on their county agreements, which require votes by the county commission to take effect. The agreements do not include the ***COVID*** test-or-vaccinate rules requested by the Levine Cava administration, said union president Steadman Stahl.

"I recommend people get it," Stahl said of the ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine***. "The union standpoint on it [is] you can't force things on people ... It's a personal decision."

**Load-Date:** October 28, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*'We are a county of small businesses.' Miami-Dade launches vaccine initiative for workers*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:63WY-TH81-JC3J-X4M9-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

October 21, 2021 Thursday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** business

**Length:** 667 words

**Byline:**  Michelle Marchante

Miami Herald

**Body**

Miami-Dade County has partnered with the Health Foundation of South Florida and more than 20 chambers of commerce to launch a new initiative to encourage vaccinations among small businesses.

The voluntary pledge program, "We Did It," is calling on businesses to help keep their workers and customers safe and reignite South Florida's economy by encouraging employee vaccinations.

"A sustained post-pandemic recovery depends on our small businesses being safe, stabilized, and reignited," said Loreen Chant, president and CEO of the Health Foundation of South Florida.

Chant spoke Thursday afternoon during a news conference at Dukunoo Jamaican Kitchen in Wynwood. Other speakers included Miami-Dade Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** and leaders of several South Florida business groups, including the Coalition of Miami-Dade Chambers of Commerce, the Beacon Council and the Greater Miami Convention and Visitors Bureau.

Business owners who want to take the pledge can visit WeDidItSFL.com for a one-stop shop of resources that provides tips and talking points on how to discuss ***COVID***-19 vaccines with employees and a list of incentives that can be used to motivate workers, such as offering bonuses and paid time off.

The website also has downloadable signs, stickers, web badges, posters and other marketing materials businesses can use to show customers that they've taken the pledge.

Thursday's announcement comes on the same day that Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis said he plans to call a special Legislative session to ban employee ***vaccine*** mandates in the state. Florida's ***vaccine*** passport ban prohibits businesses from requiring customers to show proof of vaccination, but still lets private employers mandate worker vaccinations.

DeSantis has also vowed to sue the Biden administration over the mandate it's planning to issue requiring employers with more than 100 workers to require vaccinations or weekly testing.

The federal mandate wouldn't affect most Miami-Dade County businesses, though some South Florida businesses already have an employee ***vaccine*** mandate in place, including a luxury condo in South Beach, several hospitals, restaurants and a few private universities.

Small businesses hit hard

"We are a county of small businesses. We know that the federal mandate is going to address businesses with over 100 employees. That's only about 3% of the total businesses in the county," Levine Cava said.

About 97% of businesses in Miami-Dade have fewer than 100 employees, with the vast majority having less than five workers, despite employing more than 70% of the county's workforce, according to a news release.

The mayor said Miami-Dade County has come a long way since the delta surge, with the county's percent positivity of new ***COVID***-19 cases now at about 2%, the lowest in the state. About 86.3% of eligible people in the county are fully vaccinated, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

She's hoping the "We Did It" pledge will help lead the county out of the pandemic. Business and tourism officials are also hoping the initiative will help attract more customers and improve the financial situation for small businesses, which were hit hard during the pandemic.

About 67% of small businesses in Miami-Dade were "severely negatively impacted" at the beginning of the ***COVID***-19 pandemic, which means half of them had to lay off half their staff or more, with 12% closing indefinitely, said Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce President and CEO Alfred Sanchez.

"Fast forward to today and we still have 33% of the businesses that are still negatively impacted and 41% that still haven't gone fully back to the office. So it's time for us to get this disease behind us and get fully opened in our economy," Sanchez said.

Other speakers included Coalition of Miami-Dade Chambers of Commerce Co-chair Mark Trowbridge, Beacon Council President and CEO Michael Finney, Greater Miami Convention Visitors Bureau Vice President Gisela Mart and Melissa Dunn of Dukunoo Jamaican Kitchen in Wynwood.

**Load-Date:** October 22, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Another Dem candidate for governor, a search for election conspiracy, and a fired police chief*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:63W5-7HD1-JC3J-X1HM-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

October 18, 2021 Monday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** politics\_policy\_in\_sunshine\_state

**Length:** 2040 words

**Byline:**  Mary Ellen Klas

Newsletters |

**Body**

It's Monday, Oct. 18, and one more Democrat wants to remind you there's an election next year for who will reside in the governor's mansion.

That Democrat is Miami state Sen. Annette Taddeo, who will make it official today that she's running to become the Democratic nominee for governor in 2022. Taddeo, 54, is expected to file her campaign documents with Florida's Division of Elections on Monday morning.

FloridaLegislature (4).JPGFlorida Sen. Annette Taddeo speaks during a legislative session, Friday, April 30, 2021, at the Capitol in Tallahassee, Fla.

Taddeo will enter a Democratic field dominated by Nikki Fried and Charlie Crist. Gov. Ron DeSantis has announced he's seeking re-election but has failed to file the paperwork. Taddeo knows Crist, the former governor, well. She was selected as his running mate for his failed gubernatorial bid in 2014, when he ran as a Democrat. She's hoping to become the first Latina candidate to earn a major party nomination for Florida governor.

WHAT WE'RE TALKING ABOUT

MIA\_110AcevedoHearing14NEWPEmbattled Miami Police Chief Art Acevedo sits in Miami City Hall during the special city commission meeting to determine his fate as police chief by the city's five commissioners on Thursday, Oct. 14, 2021.

Top cop ousted: With confidence lost in their top law enforcement officer, Miami officially fired Police Chief Art Acevedo last week. Here's how it went down: On Tuesday, Miami Mayor Francis Suarez spoke publicly for the first time in the three weeks since controversy erupted. Acevedo needed a lifeline. He got tossed an anchor instead as Suarez stood by the decision of City Manager Art Noriega to suspend the chief and recommend his firing to the commission. He called the drama "simply untenable and unsustainable" and an "unfortunate episode for the city of Miami." On Thursday, the city commission voted unanimously to fire Acevedo, ending the shortest tenure for a Miami police chief in recent memory.

Revising selection process: Now, Acevedo's ouster could rekindle debate over how Miami picks the city's police chief. The top proposal: allow city commissioners to appoint a search committee and give the mayor a list he must choose from.

MIA\_05ACEVEDO-SUAREZPRESSE\_CPJ.JPGMiami Mayor Francis Suarez gives his remarks regarding the suspension of Police Chief Art Acevedo at City Hall on Tuesday, Oct. 12, 2021.

Clouding Suarez: Acevedo's failed, tumultuous tenure marks also cast some shade on the city's ambitious mayor. Suarez has not only sought to make a name for himself as the future of the Republican Party, he has tried to pitch to tech moguls that he helms a smoothly-run city where sunshine meets opportunity. But the episode exposed both the city's volatility, and the limits of his power.

Election deniers push audit scheme: Across Florida, former President Donald Trump's most ardent supporters are scouring communities for evidence of voter fraud in a state he won handily. Although once an vocal Trump supporter, DeSantis has so far dismissed the idea. He was then called an "election integrity denier" by some in the group. The organizers communicate via an encrypted messaging service called Telegram, popular with far-right conspiracy theorists, the Tampa Bay Times reported. But their theories, election officials say, show a lack of understanding of how voting works. "It's like the last election didn't end," said Pasco County Supervisor of Elections Brian Corley.

Where's the Hispanic outreach? Despite a saturated field and a Hispanic population percentage that mirrors Florida's statewide average, the 11 candidates running in the special election for Florida's 20th Congressional District don't appear to be working very hard for Hispanic votes, organizers say. The district was previously held by longtime U.S. Rep. Alcee Hastings who died in April.

Was benefits break a bust? DeSantis' administration ended $300-per-week federal unemployment benefits early to spur Floridians back to jobs. Did it work? Not entirely. Worker shortages persist and national studies show that ending the benefits early had minimal impact on job growth. Meanwhile, some Floridians who had their benefits end say they still haven't found work.

WHAT WE'RE WATCHING

Broward\_School\_Board\_Meeting\_MJO\_2.jpgBroward County Public Schools Interim Superintendent Vickie Cartwright, left, attends a School Board meeting at the Kathleen C. Wright Administration Building in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, on Wednesday, July 28, 2021. The meeting discussed ***COVID***-19 safety precautions and potential ***mask*** mandates for the upcoming school year.

Politics of school boards: As the governor and Republican leaders across the state vow to make school board governance a ripe political issue next election year, we're watching the Broward County School Board tiptoe cautiously as it decides on naming a permanent superintendent. Last week, the board agreed Interim Superintendent Vickie Cartwright has performed well since they selected her in late July, including her forthright defense of the district's ***mask*** mandate in the face of aggressive sanctions from the DeSantis Administration and state Board of Education. But they're now saying they want public input before they commit to giving her the job permanently.

Big maps, little public input: Florida's Republican-controlled Legislature says it's ready to discontinue the once-vaunted tradition of conducting public hearings before it draws new maps. They will instead rely on the public to submit comments and maps through a redistricting website. But in response to questions from legislators at meetings this week, they have made no commitment that they will review what they get.

Restrain of youth in East wing Horseshoe area2 (1).jpg

More weak state contract oversight: Where was the oversight? It's a refrain we ask time and again as journalists do more to reveal flawed, dangerous and potentially corrupt practices by companies contracted to do the state's job than do agency heads and legislators. This week's example comes, again, from the Department of Juvenile Justice. Contractor TrueCore Behavioral Solutions was found by DJJ's Inspector General with "possibly systemic problems" after a riot led by juveniles trying to call attention to constant abuse. The company lost the contract at the Okeechobee Juvenile Offender Corrections Center, where the riot occurred, but managed to keep contracts worth $350 million at nine other facilities.

Improving ***COVID*** trends: A U.S. Department of Health and Human Services report on Sunday showed 3,001 ***COVID***-19 patients listed from 255 Florida hospitals, continuing a trend of decreasing hospitalizations. It's a dramatic decline from just two months ago, but it's worth understanding what we weren't told.

IMG\_MIA\_20210818AD0088De\_5\_1\_A4L2JPBM\_L675035865.JPGThe Regeneron Clinic treatment site in Pembroke Pines at CB Smith Park on Wednesday, Aug. 18, 2021.

Does the narrative match the facts? Remember when the governor complained that the Biden administrative had vindictively reduced Florida's supply of monoclonal antibodies, even as cases were dropping? A month after the federal government cut back Florida's monoclonal antibody supply, data reported by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services shows no sign of a MAB shortage.

Missing data: While the governor was traveling the state promoting monoclonal antibody treatments, another phenomenon was taking place in communities across Florida. For 105 days as the Delta variant was surging, the ***COVID***-19 death toll went missing. The Department of Health withheld the information it had previously reported to counties, the Tampa Bay Times reports. The reason, the state explained, is DOH "is equipped to make decisions regarding the best and most understood data" and, presumably, the public is not. University of South Florida virologist Dr. Michael Teng called that "paternalistic and contrary to the idea of transparency in government."

FL ***COVID*** DEATHSThe Florida Department of Health collects the ***COVID***-19 death data published Monday-Saturday by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. On Aug. 10, amid a surge in cases, Florida switched from reporting deaths by report date to death date, creating what experts called an "artificial decline" in the final two weeks of data.

There's more: The state also chose to withhold information that had previously been public, including: "county-level vaccinations by race, age and gender; infected patients and staff in long-term health care facilities; and infections among students and school staff,'' the Times reports. Florida remains the only state not reporting this data daily. Some states even report breakthrough cases.

First ***vaccine*** fine: Meanwhile, the governor last week continued to "make sure that we protect Florida against" employers who require people to get vaccinated. The Florida Department of Health fined Leon County $3.5 million for requiring employees to provide proof of vaccination. County Administrator Vince Long said called DeSantis' position was a "political strategy" and the county was justified legally and for public health reasons.

Continuum Pool\_Kike Flores Photo.jpgContinuum's employees must be fully vaccinated by Nov. 15.

Miami Beach resort mandates vax: The governor's threats aren't working for Continuum, a resort-style luxury oceanfront condominium on Miami Beach. The company said it is mandating the ***vaccine*** on employees and contractors to help keep its staff, visitors and more than 500 residents safe from ***COVID***-19. Florida's ***vaccine*** mandate ban prohibits businesses and government entities from requiring customers -- or in the case of schools, students -- to show proof of vaccination to get service. So far, state law still allows businesses to mandate vaccines for employees. Although DeSantis said last week he may want to change that and seek legislation that imposes the ***vaccine*** mandate ban on companies like Disney, Delta Airlines, and many others.

MIA\_BidenSurfsideNinelnewADD.JPGPresident Joe Biden during a meeting with officials at the St. Regis Hotel on Thursday, July 1, 2021, after the collapse of the Champlain Towers South Condominium in Surfside. Florida Governor Ron DeSantis (L) and Miami-Dade Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** (R) are seated with the president.

Fear of feds? The governor says his goal is to give people "freedom of choice" and suggests that employers are requiring vaccinations because they are "afraid of the feds." The Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration is expected to release a rule that would require businesses with more than 100 employees to confirm all of their workers are fully vaccinated, or otherwise require them to submit to weekly ***COVID*** tests.

$20K per hospitalization: What the governor fails to mention is that employers may also fear the loss of productivity and medical cost of employees who aren't vaccinated. Some stats: serious illness and hospitalization is 29 times more likely for someone who is not vaccinated and the average cost of hospitalization for ***COVID*** is around $20,000, with those requiring ventilator much higher.

Sanctioning businesses in Cuba: A group of Republicans in Congress wants to give the president widespread authority to sanction non-Cubans who do business with the country's defense, security and intelligence sectors, the latest policy response from Washington after widespread pro-democracy protests in Cuba in July.

Florida Republican Sen. Rick Scott and Republican U.S. Rep. Byron Donalds say they're introducing the Denying Earnings to the Military Oligarchy in Cuba and Restricting Activities of the Cuban Intelligence Apparatus (DEMOCRACIA) Act.

Stay well and we'd love to hear from you. Miami Herald Capitol Bureau Chief Mary Ellen Klas curates the Politics and Policy in the Sunshine State newsletter. If you have any ideas or suggestions, please drop me a note at [*meklas@miamiherald.com*](mailto:meklas@miamiherald.com)

Special offer: The Miami Herald needs your support if we are to continue to supply the meaningful local journalism you count on during these unprecedented times. We've lowered our monthly rate for unlimited digital access to $.99 a month. Check it out!

Know someone who'd like to get this newsletter? Send this to a friend to receive it weekly.

**Load-Date:** October 18, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*After tragedy, Surfside mayor comforts families, stokes feuds and floats a conspiracy*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:63TP-S261-DYJM-M1JB-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

October 11, 2021 Monday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** miami\_beach

**Length:** 2995 words

**Byline:**  Aaron Leibowitz

Miami Herald

**Body**

Charles Burkett wants to know why. Why did half of Champlain Towers South crumble on June 24? Why did the deadliest residential building failure in modern U.S. history happen in his small town? Why can't anyone answer those questions yet?

This summer, the Surfside mayor found an enticing possibility: a debunked conspiracy theory that sought to connect the June 23 death in a Spanish prison of antivirus software entrepreneur John McAfee with the Surfside building collapse. At the heart of the theory, which assumes the building was deliberately brought down, is a screenshot of a (likely fake) tweet suggesting McAfee was storing data near the tower and an online post suggesting McAfee owned a unit in the building (which he didn't).

Never mind that federal authorities said early on that there was no evidence terrorism played a role in the collapse. Burkett's interest was piqued. So he texted Town Manager Andrew Hyatt in early August, suggesting Surfside police look into whether the tweet was real.

"I think it's as good a theory as any other," Burkett told the Herald.

By July 1, the McAfee conspiracy theory had been debunked by PolitiFact, Reuters, the Associated Press and USA Today, among others.

Allyn Kilsheimer, the renowned engineer Surfside officials hired to study the collapse, said he was unaware of the McAfee theory. But he was skeptical after a reporter described it to him.

"People that believe what they see on social networks should realize that they're reading a bunch of bull---- put up there by people who don't know what the f--- they're talking about," Kilsheimer said.

After an initial wave of solidarity following the collapse, Burkett has continued a long political history of antagonizing and befuddling -- including those actually charged with finding what caused the catastrophe.

The mayor has feuded with county officials over the town's lack of access to the property, which is considered a crime scene and therefore sealed off; was threatened with a subpoena for records by the State Attorney's Office after the feds complained he was ignoring their pleas for assistance (he says no one passed along the message); and had to be escorted off the site before a crucial meeting in July because he snapped pictures without authorization.

As the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) investigates the tragedy, the wholehearted cooperation of the town will be critical -- not just to pinpointing the cause of the collapse, but potentially determining whether other nearby towers built or designed by the same individuals might be unsafe.

Burkett has not only ruffled feathers with the feds, he has also infuriated fellow members of the town commission by -- according to them -- hogging the spotlight.

"I tend to have a reputation for saying what I think. I tend to create a tiny bit of controversy sometimes," he said. "I do it because I'm up there swinging for all of us. I really believe that."

'Stop complaining and get down to the site'

Burkett was a constant presence after the collapse. Wearing a baseball cap and Surfside polo T-shirt, he addressed the media on TV and at press conferences day after day, and met with anguished family members during a weeks-long search and rescue process.

He shared gut-churning details with the public. On June 29, he spoke about encountering 12-year-old Elisheva Cohen staring at the rubble the night before, praying for her missing father, Dr. Brad Cohen, and uncle, Gary Cohen, both of whom were later confirmed to be among the 98 dead. Burkett brought Elisheva to meet President Joe Biden when he visited Surfside on July 1, and the mayor still wears a beaded bracelet she made him.

Burkett has been a "blessing" and has "a heart of gold," Brad Cohen's widow, Soraya Cohen, said in a text message. "He was a big comfort to my daughter during the worst time in her life," she said.

MIA\_Collapse\_Day\_23\_MJO\_2Surfside Mayor Charles Burkett visited the Surfside Wall of Hope & Memorial as rescue teams continued their recovery mission at the collapsed Champlain Towers South site on July 16.

The mayor was also involved in big post-collapse decisions. As a tropical storm was approaching in early July, he advocated for the still-standing part of Champlain Towers South to be demolished immediately to protect rescue workers, a position he said he shared with Gov. Ron DeSantis -- even as Miami-Dade Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** said the demolition would likely take weeks.

The building was successfully imploded in a matter of days ahead of the storm.

But while Surfside officials projected an image of unity and strength, there was bickering and bitterness behind the scenes, echoing a tradition of chaos that has colored the town's politics since even before Champlain Towers South was built in 1981.

Take the president's visit. When Biden came to Surfside, Burkett joined him and first responders for meetings with big-name officials, including DeSantis, Sens. Marco Rubio and Rick Scott and U.S. Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz. But the town's four other elected officials were not invited. Two were angry -- and suspected the mayor was responsible.

"Let me remind you that this is a 5 person commission, not just a Mayor that thinks he runs the show alone," Commissioner Nelly Velasquez said in a July 2 email to the town's communications director. "It was highly offensive that the rest of the commission was not present yesterday during the presidents visit to OUR town."

Burkett shot back in an email, referring to himself in third person as "the mayor" as he denied having anything to do with the decision. He told the Herald someone had simply informed him that he was invited to the meetings with the president, so he showed up.

"The mayor did not create the list to visit with the president of the United States," he wrote to Velasquez and other town officials.

Vice Mayor Tina Paul was also not allowed in, writing the next day in an email: "It is an embarrassment for the town that I have been left out of the important meetings and the residents and media see and know." She griped that she had received "little to no communication" since the collapse.

Burkett fired back again.

"Stop complaining and get down to the site and serve your constituents from 7am to 11 pm every single day, like the manager and I have done since that two am call," he wrote. "Service is our duty, not whining about not receiving communications."

BidenSurfside six lnew add.jpgBurkett (left, wearing baseball cap) attends a meeting with President Joe Biden at the St. Regis Hotel on July 1, 2021.

A dollar a year

In Surfside, a town of about 6,000 people just north of Miami Beach, elected officials including the mayor make $1 per year. The town has a strong-manager form of government, meaning the mayor's formal powers are similar to those of his colleagues.

Still, Burkett effectively served as Surfside's chief spokesperson and public face after the collapse. The town hired crisis communications consultant Brian Andrews in part to handle media requests, but Burkett preferred to take calls directly from reporters.

Velasquez, the commissioner, said that despite her frustration about the presidential visit, she was fine with Burkett taking a leading role.

"I thought he did very well on that and going out there and being there every day," she said. "That takes a lot."

MIA\_103SurfsideMemorial23NESurfside Mayor Charles Burkett (center) joined families of Surfside collapse victims as they held a press conference Sept. 23 at the site of the Champlain Towers South collapse to call for a memorial to be constructed where 98 victims died.

As interview requests poured in after the collapse, Burkett -- a political independent who says he is a fiscal conservative and a social moderate -- initially sought to prioritize interviews with Fox News, sources said.

He has not taken the ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine***, he told the Herald, citing skepticism about how it works and his belief that he already had the virus in February 2020. Burkett recalled a sore throat after returning from a trip to New York City, but that was before testing was widely available.

A product of Catholic schools and the University of Miami, Burkett says his view on ***COVID*** is that he's "more comfortable relying on my own antibodies to handle it -- and a lot of prayer."

Private briefings, public utterances

Burkett caused a stir after the collapse not only among Surfside officials, but also with Levine Cava, the county mayor.

He would put Levine Cava's team on edge during their twice-daily media briefings near the site, events where the Surfside mayor would often reveal behind-the-scenes information about the search effort.

While Levine Cava stopped attending private family briefings after some relatives of the dead asked politicians to stay away, Burkett continued going to the gatherings and shared some of the discussions with reporters.

People who spoke to Levine Cava afterward said she was stunned on July 11 when Burkett stood before the microphones and held up his cell phone to reveal a photo of a ring found in the debris, identifying it as likely belonging to Brad Cohen.

Burkett said members of the Israel Defense Forces, who had joined the search and found the ring, asked him to share the information publicly.

"They wanted me to let people know they had found that ring," Burkett said.

In late July, a time when relations were particularly strained, the State Attorney's Office also threatened to subpoena Surfside for records NIST had requested, saying Burkett had not been responsive. Burkett said he hadn't received an earlier message from the federal agency.

"It's obnoxious, really," Burkett said of the subpoena threat. "They're the ones that have been blocking our investigation and [a prosecutor] has got the nerve to imply that we're not helping."

Still, Burkett said he has a "good working relationship" with officials at various levels, including Levine Cava, DeSantis and Wasserman Schultz.

"I try to work with everybody," he said.

An interesting childhood

Even in the heat of the rescue effort, Burkett made time in mid-July to talk to a reporter about his early years -- a unique upbringing that involved moving into his grandmother's Miami Beach mansion when he was 12, after his grandfather died, and befriending Barry Gibb of the Bee Gees when Gibb moved in next door.

Burkett's grandmother was the heiress to a Cleveland family that owned one of the world's largest nut-and-bolt factories, he said. Living with her at 5800 North Bay Dr., Burkett, a guitar player and singer, developed a kinship with Gibb and his brothers, who lived nearby.

That led to some remarkable memories: Sitting in Gibb's living room as the Bee Gees performed. Playing tennis with Elton John. Teaching Michael Jackson how to water ski. Going fishing with Diana Ross.

"It's amazing how lucky I am, how blessed I am and how grateful I am for all the wonderful things that happened to me," Burkett said.

As Burkett reminisced at Town Hall on July 15, he lost track of time. A reporter reminded him a 4:30 p.m. family briefing at the Sea View Hotel would be starting soon, and he hurried downstairs to meet a police officer waiting outside to drive him to the hotel. The officer sped off -- sirens on, weaving through traffic and arriving just as the meeting was about to start.

"You did it," Burkett said to the officer when they arrived. "I'm impressed."

IMG-276\_fitted.jpegCharles Burkett with Michael Jackson in the early 1980s. Burkett, now the Surfside mayor, says he taught Jackson to water ski when Burkett was living at his grandmother's mansion in Miami Beach.

Burkett chose to stay with his grandmother until she died when he was 25. He said he "didn't get a penny" from her estate until 30 years later, when her children had died. Burkett's father also owned property, developing strip malls and shopping centers, but Burkett said he didn't inherit any of it.

In the meantime, Burkett said he worked as a construction site laborer and as a document runner for the law firm Becker & Poliakoff. He began buying properties of his own in Miami Beach in the mid-1980s, and bought more over the years, renting them out to tenants and later selling for profits.

Today, he owns only a few properties locally -- his home in Surfside, a condo in Bal Harbour and an apartment complex in Miami Beach, where he recently ordered tenants to leave within 45 days after residents complained in a news article that the elevator had been out of service for over a year and balconies had never been fixed after Hurricane Irma in 2017.

Burkett blamed the poor conditions on delays with the city's permitting process and challenges hiring and retaining contractors. He told the Herald he has offered to return the month's rent to tenants who moved out by the end of September.

"A lot of tenants have asked for help. That was something we were happy to do," he said.

A search of Miami-Dade court records shows Burkett's company, Burkett Properties, has filed hundreds of eviction lawsuits against tenants in the county dating back to 1989. Burkett said it goes with the territory.

"You hate it ... but when you have a dispute, that's the way you resolve it," he said.

Burkett said his company owns properties in eight states: Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, Michigan, Indiana, Wisconsin, Colorado and California.

'Our town has suffered from infighting'

Burkett made his first run for Surfside mayor in 2004, losing by 22 votes. He was later fined $6,000 by the Florida Elections Commission for violating state elections laws related to improper reporting of his campaign's credit card use.

He apologized that year in a letter in the Herald, saying the violations were unintentional.

In 2006, Burkett ran for mayor a second time and won in a nasty election cycle that prompted the Miami New Times to declare that Surfside politics had "devolved into an ugly mess."

During Burkett's initial two terms as mayor, town politics centered on the fate of the community center -- the decades-old iteration of a since-rebuilt structure that was at the center of a recent controversy over a potential land swap to place a memorial to collapse victims at the Champlain Towers South site.

After the building was torn down, Burkett campaigned against a 2008 ballot question on whether to issue a 30-year, $16.5 million bond to pay for a new center, raising concerns about tax hikes. The bond referendum failed.

Burkett was defeated in 2010 by Daniel Dietch, a trained geologist and anthropologist who rode a skateboard to town meetings and would remain in the mayor's seat for the next 10 years. But Burkett returned to dethrone him last March, part of a sea change on the commission as four new officials were elected.

His 2020 platform -- pledging to "save our small-town way of life in Surfside" -- struck a chord with voters after a proposed $33.5 million private-public partnership to overhaul the town's municipal facilities and add commercial development rankled residents. That plan was withdrawn in 2018.

But Burkett's return to office has been messy, even beyond the Champlain Towers collapse.

As he presses for lower tax rates and a reworked zoning code to decrease density and protect homeowners, Burkett has found himself on something of a political island. He uses a personal blog, Facebook page, email newsletters and the town's monthly Surfside Gazette publication to promote his agenda and take frequent swipes at his colleagues, who have criticized him for seeking to politicize town communications.

In the October issue of the Gazette, Burkett called out Paul and Salzhauer by name for disagreeing with some of his zoning code proposals, including one to allow taller hedges in residents' front yards.

He saves his most pointed commentary for his blog (whose tagline is, "News that you probably will not see in the Surfside Gazette"), where he recently shared images of Salzhauer's backyard as part of the ongoing hedge debate.

Salzhauer is his most vocal critic. She has twice given Burkett the middle finger during virtual commission meetings after Burkett muted her microphone. In the first case, Burkett was arguing that Christians should be added to a proposed anti-hate resolution as targets of discrimination during the ***COVID*** pandemic. Salzhauer, who is Jewish, flipped Burkett the double bird after he accused her of harboring "apparent anti-Christian zeal."

"I do regret not doing more to keep him out of office," Salzhauer told the Herald last week. "Shame on me."

Salzhauer.PNGSurfside Commissioner Eliana Salzhauer gives the middle finger to Mayor Charles Burkett during a virtual meeting on June 9, 2020.

Paul, the vice mayor, is contemplating a run for mayor against Burkett next March. Burkett has not yet formally committed to seeking re-election.

"Our town has really suffered from all this infighting," Paul said. "After the Champlain collapse, I had hoped that things would change."

Burkett, meanwhile, has been considering bigger things in the future -- like a run for governor someday after DeSantis, whom Burkett supports, is out of office.

Burkett doesn't shy away from sharing his political and economic worldview, which is rare for elected officials in non-partisan municipal seats. Below email messages from his town-issued account, he features a rotating cast of quotes that reflect his beliefs on small government and fiscal conservatism.

"The problems we face today are there because the people who work for a living, are now outnumbered by those who vote for a living," one of the quotes says.

Another reads: "Any man who thinks he can be happy and prosperous by letting the government take care of him, better take a closer look at the American Indian." He attributes it to Henry Ford, founder of Ford Motor Company.

The quote went viral earlier this year via a Facebook page called Americans Against Socialism. There is no evidence Ford ever said it.

Miami Herald staff writers Martin Vassolo and Douglas Hanks contributed to this report.

**Load-Date:** October 11, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Pfizer vaccine booster now available at drive-thru, walk-up sites in Miami-Dade*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:63RR-PKM1-JC3J-X029-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

October 1, 2021 Friday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** coronavirus

**Length:** 465 words

**Byline:**  Michelle Marchante

Miami Herald

**Body**

People 65 and older and other high-risk groups can now get Pfizer's ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** booster at all of the drive-thru and walk-up sites run by Miami-Dade County.

"The booster is a critical tool in our ongoing fight to protect the most vulnerable from ***COVID*** -- and if the last 18 months have taught us anything, it's that we must continue to take all the steps possible to keep ourselves and our loved ones safe," Miami-Dade County Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** said in a Friday news release.

People eligible for the booster can get the shot at least six months after completing Pfizer's two-dose series. Anyone who received the Moderna or Johnson & Johnson ***COVID***-19 vaccines is not eligible.

Besides seniors and long-term care facility residents, anyone 18 and older who has a health condition that makes them high-risk for severe ***COVID*** illness can get the booster. That includes people diagnosed with asthma, diabetes and obesity.

People 18 and older who work or live in a place that makes them high-risk for being exposed to ***COVID***-19 and falling ill with the disease can also get the shot.

This includes first responders, healthcare workers and educators. Food and agriculture workers, correction workers and inmates, public-transit workers, grocery-store workers and residents of homeless shelters are also eligible.

People who want to get Pfizer's booster at a county-run site will need to bring a valid photo ID and show proof (CDC vaccination card or immunization record) that they have completed Pfizer's two-dose series.

Some of the drive-thru sites that do have the booster include Tropical Park, Dolphin Mall and Zoo Miami. Some of the walk-up sites offering boosters include Aventura Mall, the Miami Beach Convention Center and the Stephen P. Clark Government Center in downtown Miami.

A few county-run sites are also offering boosters both by drive-thru and walk-up, such as Miami Dade College North Campus and Jose Marti Park in Miami.

Some of the sites don't require appointments but recommend them, and others require them.

To find a site near you, its hours of operation and information on which ***vaccine*** it has and if an appointment is required, visit miamidade.gov/***vaccine***.

Where else can you get a Pfizer ***COVID*** booster?

The Florida Department of Health in Broward County is also offering the booster dose at all of its drive-thru and walk-up sites. The sites don't take appointments. To find a site, visit [*www.broward.org/CoronaVirus/Pages/Vaccination-Sites.aspx*](http://www.broward.org/CoronaVirus/Pages/Vaccination-Sites.aspx)

The Pfizer booster is also available through retail pharmacies, including Publix, Walgreens, CVS, Winn-Dixie and Walmart.

If you want to get your shot at a store in Florida, keep in mind that it will depend on availability. To schedule an appointment or to check a specific store's availability, visit the retailer's website.

**Load-Date:** October 2, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*In 'civil war' for Hialeah mayor's seat, familiar faces battle over a powerful job*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:63PX-G891-DYJM-M2K7-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

September 28, 2021 Tuesday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** hialeah

**Length:** 1989 words

**Byline:**  Aaron Leibowitz

Miami Herald

**Body**

Reynaldo Flores turned 100 years old last week. On Thursday, the day after his birthday, the longtime Hialeah resident got a party in his driveway courtesy of Esteban "Steve" Bovo's mayoral campaign -- with balloons, a cake, campaign T-shirts and a Spanish-language rendition of "Happy Birthday" led by Bovo himself.

In the race to become Hialeah's first new mayor in a decade, going the extra mile to win voters like Flores will be crucial. The front-runners, Bovo and Isis Garcia-Martinez, have to distinguish themselves: They're both conservatives, both of Cuban descent, and both staples on the Hialeah political scene.

"It's almost akin to a civil war," Bovo said Thursday from the passenger seat of his campaign manager's Tesla as they drove from Bovo's campaign headquarters at West 49th Street and Ludlum Avenue for another day of knocking on likely voters' doors. "She's been around," Bovo said of Garcia-Martinez. "We both have a record."

The first round between them is Nov. 2, when they will share the mayoral ballot with three other candidates. Julio Martinez, a Hialeah mayor in the early 1990s who leads the Hialeah Republican Club, briefly endorsed Garcia-Martinez before entering the race. Juan Santana is seeking office for a third time after two unsuccessful runs against the incumbent, Carlos Hernández. And Fernando Godo, a right-wing activist, is running for mayor after he spearheaded a failed 2019 effort to remove Hernández from office.

If none of the five candidates gets over 50% of the vote, there will be a runoff between the top two finishers on Nov. 16.

Three city council seats are also up for grabs. Carl Zogby is seeking reelection, while Paul Hernandez chose not to run and Katharine Cue-Fuente is term-limited.

MIA\_HIALEAHMAYORSRACE\_BOVO- (10)Hialeah mayoral candidate Esteban 'Steve' Bovo shields the candles on a cake for Reynaldo Flores, who recently turned 100 years old. Mr. Bovo stopped by Mr. Flores' house on Sept. 23, 2021, while he was out knocking on doors in the neighborhood.

In Miami-Dade's second-largest city, a community of about 230,000 north of U.S. 27, the mayor has unique power. Unlike in most Miami-Dade municipalities, the Hialeah mayor is the city's top administrator, running day-to-day operations, although he does not have a vote on the city council. Hernández, the current mayor, was paid over $190,000 last year in salary and benefits, according to city data.

And in a city where endorsements from current and former mayors carry substantial weight, Bovo and Garcia-Martinez have emerged as the two leading candidates. Julio Robaina, the mayor from 2005 to 2011, has endorsed Bovo. Raul Martinez, a Democrat who was Hialeah's mayor for 24 years starting in 1981, has denounced Bovo without formally endorsing Garcia-Martinez.

Hernández, who succeeded Robaina and is departing due to term limits, said he views Bovo and Garcia-Martinez as the only two "serious candidates" to replace him. He said he'll wait to see debates -- starting with one Oct. 9 between Bovo and Garcia-Martinez on Telemundo -- before possibly making a pick.

"I want to see what their vision is, how they're going to spend money," Hernández said.

hialeah city boundaries

Hernández said he wants to hear how the candidates would handle running a city with a proposed $410 million budget -- for example, how they would plan to cut taxes while also adding police officers. "We're not magicians here," he said.

Two locals square off

Bovo has the flashier résumé of the pair. A Hialeah city councilman in the late 1990s, he ascended to the state House in 2008, then spent nine years on the Miami-Dade county commission. Last year, he reached a runoff for county mayor, coming in first in an August primary, but lost in November to a more liberal county commissioner, ***Daniella Levine Cava***.

"I won an election in August last year and then lost in November," he said. "I know full well I've got to run through the finish line here."

Garcia-Martinez, a Hialeah councilwoman in the early 1990s and again from 2007 to 2019, is also well-known locally. In 2011, she became the first Hispanic woman to serve as Hialeah council president, a post she held for four years. She lost the presidency after she opposed a real estate project, Villa de las Palmas, that Hernández supported.

Garcia-Martinez owns a daycare in the city, Reagan Educational Academy,and has lived in Hialeah since she was two after leaving Cuba as an infant with her mother.

"She would have loved this campaign," Garcia-Martinez said of her mother last Friday, sitting inside a Chipotle on West 49th Street and Red Road as she prepared to knock on doors. Her mother, an architect, died five years ago. "I was raised by a single mother. I know how it is. [Hialeah residents] are hard-working, middle class people."

Isis Garcia-Martinez\_English Isis Garcia-Martinez runs for mayor of Hialeah.

On Friday, she paid a visit to the one-story home where her mother lived on West 37th Street near Red Road, which Garcia-Martinez now owns and rents out. She caught up with neighbors and walked around an area lined with her campaign signs, knocking on voters' doors as she handed out door-hangers she had personally signed -- "Cariños, Isis" -- along with campaign-branded goodie bags filled with hand sanitizer, masks and pill boxes.

"The seniors are always happy to get something," she said.

Hernández, the outgoing mayor, told the Miami Herald he's surprised the battle between Bovo and Garcia-Martinez hasn't been nastier so far, recalling his bitter campaign against Raul Martinez in 2011.

"It's very quiet in the city," he said. "I really expected more fireworks."

MIA\_HIALEAH\_***VACCINE***\_DAV12.JPGMayor Carlos Hernandez speaks to the media as the city opens a new vaccination site at Bucky Dent Park in Hialeah, Florida, on Monday, March 15, 2021.

Campaigns start getting 'nasty'

But the intensity is picking up in the city of 112,000 voters, with mail ballots going out on Oct. 5. Both candidates' campaigns have dropped negative ads about their opponents in the past few weeks. In a recent mailer, Garcia-Martinez's campaign said Hialeah "deserves better than a career politician like Bovo." Bovo's political committee, A Better Hialeah, said in a mailer that voters "can't trust Isis to run Hialeah's finances," pointing to votes she cast during her council tenure that increased taxes and fees.

In an interview, Garcia-Martinez suggested Bovo's campaign was behind the cancellation of two debates planned by Univision, one on Radio Mambí and another on Channel 23. Bovo scoffed at the claim, saying the stations made the decisions. "I don't know why there's this narrative," he said. "I spent all last year debating."

Bovo, meanwhile, has raised questions about Garcia-Martinez making a $150,000 loan to jump-start her own campaign, suggesting it's unclear how she got the money. Garcia-Martinez says it came from her own savings. Her campaign, meanwhile, has pointed to big donations to Bovo's political committee -- including $100,000 from affiliates of Prestige, which is building several multifamily developments in Hialeah -- to suggest Bovo can't be trusted to serve the public.

Nonsense, Bovo says: "There won't be a person out there who can say that, because they contributed to my campaign, they've got me."

Bovo said Garcia-Martinez's campaign advisers, led by another Hialeah staple, political strategist Sasha Tirador, "are very aggressive folks."

"Some would say nasty," he said.

HIALEAH\_CARLOSHERNANDEZ\_SN025Political strategist Sasha Tirador speaks in Hialeah in November 2019.On Thursday, Nov. 7, 2019, political strategist Sasha Tirador speaks in Hialeah during a press conference about possible anomalies in the computer system of the Miami-Dade County Elections Department.

Tirador said Bovo is "petty." She has been looking for ways to not only attack Bovo, but also to make Garcia-Martinez stand out. Last week, the campaign released a jingle: "¡Escúchame, Hialeah!"

"Que no te cojan de bobo, escúchame Hialeah, si quieres que ganen todos, vota por Isis Garcia," goes the jingle, which translates to: "Don't get fooled; listen, Hialeah, if you want everyone to win, vote for Isis Garcia." Tirador noted that the word "bobo," meaning "fool" in Spanish, conveniently sounds a lot like "Bovo."

"Hialeah is a city that is famous for their jingles during campaign season," Tirador said. "You have to have a jingle. If not, you're not really campaigning."

Isis jingle

Divergent takes on DeSantis

On key issues, Bovo and Garcia-Martinez have similar platforms: keep taxes low, promote new development, support small businesses, address high water rates, and work to keep and attract young people to the majority-Cuban, working class city.

"The knock on the city has historically been, for a younger generation, there's this capital flight. They go spend their money elsewhere," Bovo said.

Esteban "Steve" Bovo is one of the front-runners to replace Carlos Hernandez as the mayor of Hialeah.Esteban "Steve" Bovo is one of the front-runners to replace Carlos Hernandez as the mayor of Hialeah.

Both candidates have mostly steered clear of criticizing Hernández, the brash, big-personality leader who has shaped Hialeah politics for ten years. Bovo has taken the high road since Hernández snubbed him in the primary for county mayor last year and instead endorsed Democrat Alex Penelas, though he later endorsed Bovo in the general election.

Hernández has weathered his share of controversy as mayor, including an ethics commission finding in 2015 that he lied about making high-interest loans to a convicted Ponzi schemer, and questions about his defense of Hialeah police after the department declined to discipline an officer who was accused of sexually assaulting multiple women. The officer was later federally charged.

But there is more daylight between Bovo and Garcia-Martinez on the matter of Gov. Ron DeSantis and his handling of the ***COVID***-19 pandemic. Bovo has only praise for the governor, saying he agrees with the fight against ***mask*** mandates in schools, even as he noted his 11-year-old son wears a ***mask*** to school.

"Would I encourage ***mask***-wearing? Obviously," Bovo said. "I'm not in favor of mandates on anything."

Garcia-Martinez, on the other hand, is critical of DeSantis's approach. She stopped short of endorsing a ***mask*** mandate, but said the governor should push harder to encourage ***mask***-wearing in the name of public safety.

"I've always been a Republican, but I totally disagree with this governor," she said. "We don't want to just mandate something, but the reality is, you don't want to lose families to this virus."

MIA\_HIALEAHMAYORSRACE\_GARCI (5)Hialeah mayoral candidate Isis Garcia-Martinez, left, leaves some signs for a supporter on Sept. 24, 2021.

In taking shots at DeSantis, Garcia-Martinez seemed to be following the lead of Hernández, who has waged several public battles with the governor over his handling of the pandemic -- and over his decision to exclude the mayor of Florida's sixth-largest city from certain ***COVID***-related public appearances.

Bovo is hoping for an endorsement from DeSantis, who encouraged him to run for mayor in February before Bovo had announced his candidacy. Bovo told the Herald a formal endorsement from the governor could be coming soon; a spokeswoman for DeSantis declined to comment.

"Carlos [Hernández] has his style and I have my style. My style won't be to run to the media and criticize the governor," said Bovo, adding that he would instead leverage his relationships with state leaders to open a dialogue about conflicts.

Whoever wins will have the power to shape Hialeah's future. Hernández, after 10 years of wielding that power, said he might take a back seat as Bovo and Garcia-Martinez continue to hit the streets.

"I think my endorsement would mean a lot," he said. "But I've been very clear with both Isis and Steve from the beginning: Their job is to sell themselves to the citizens of Hialeah."

**Load-Date:** September 29, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Speakers at DeSantis' event object to vaccine mandate but cite misinformation, too*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:63KV-XHT1-JC3J-X4JK-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

September 13, 2021 Monday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** coronavirus

**Length:** 832 words

**Byline:**  Lawrence Mower

Miami Herald

**Dateline:** TALLAHASSEE

**Body**

Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis stood silently Monday as employees for the City of Gainesville repeated misinformation about the ***COVID***-19 vaccines during a news conference set up by his office.

"The ***vaccine*** changes your RNA," said Darris Friend, who said he's about a year and a half away from retirement after 22 years with the city.

Another implied that the ***vaccine*** could kill her.

"I will not put my children through the possibility of losing another maternal figure in their lives," said Christine Damm, who has worked for the city for 10 years.

DeSantis shifted his feet in apparent discomfort but did not provide context or correct information as he championed efforts to fight a Gainesville city policy requiring workers to be vaccinated -- or lose their jobs.

Florida ready to fine cities, counties 'millions' for requiring employee vaccinations

DeSantis spokesperson Christina Pushaw said questions about why DeSantis didn't correct the speakers "misses the point" of the news conference.

"The governor has never said the ***vaccine*** changes your RNA, and nobody who has seen his 50+ public appearances promoting vaccination throughout Florida this year would think that is the governor's position," Pushaw wrote in an email. "The speaker whose remarks included that comment was at the press conference in his capacity as a member of a lawsuit against the city government's extreme overreach."

What to know about Pfizer, Moderna and J&J ***COVID***-19 vaccinesThere are three ***COVID***-19 vaccines authorized for emergency use in the U.S.: Pfizer-BioNTech, Moderna and Johnson & Johnson. All three prevent severe disease and death but there are some differences on how each ***vaccine*** works. Here's what to know.

The CDC's vaccination information

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has clearly stated that the coronavirus vaccines do not alter a person's DNA, which has been a concern by some ***vaccine***-hesitant people. And the vaccines have been shown to be overwhelmingly safe.

The vaccines by Pfizer and Moderna are known as messenger RNA vaccines, a new type of ***vaccine*** to fight infectious diseases, according to the CDC.

Unlike many vaccines, which use a weakened or inactive germ to trigger an immune response, Pfizer's and Moderna's coronavirus vaccines do something different. They teach cells to make a protein, or a piece of a protein, to trigger the immune response. That immune response produces antibodies to protect against ***COVID***-19.

The CDC has also said reports of death following ***COVID***-19 vaccination are exceptionally rare -- 0.0020 percent -- and that those reported deaths don't necessarily mean the ***vaccine*** caused the death. It noted that a small number of people have had extreme allergic reactions or blood clots with low platelets after receiving the Johnson & Johnson ***vaccine*** (which does not use messenger RNA technology). The rate of blood clots with low platelets is about 7 per 1 million vaccinated women between 18 and 49 years old, according to the CDC, and it's even more rare for other age groups.

Explaining the RNA function

Sally Alrabaa, an infectious disease specialist at the University of South Florida, said the "whole concept" of the man's statement is "false and wrong."

A person's genetic code is contained in DNA, which is enclosed by a cell's nucleus. Neither the ***vaccine*** nor the virus can penetrate that nucleus or change the DNA. RNA consists of messenger molecules created by DNA.

Because the ***vaccine*** can't change our DNA, it can't change our RNA, Alrabaa said. The mRNA ***vaccine*** delivers a message to the ribosome, which makes proteins, to make the protein that triggers the immune system to produce immunity against the actual virus, she said.

"Frankly, our medical community, who has been tirelessly fighting this deadly infection and pleading with people to protect themselves and their loved ones by getting vaccinated, is disappointed that DeSantis didn't correct this man to stop deadly misinformation," Alrabaa said.

Attorney General Ashley Moody applauded after "The ***vaccine*** changes your RNA" comment and appeared to tell the man "good job" as he walked away from the lectern. Moody later noted that Florida officials have told people to "strongly consider" the ***vaccine***.

The comment caught the attention of some prominent politicos, including an adviser to Agriculture Commissioner Nikki Fried, a Democrat who's hoping to challenge DeSantis' reelection next year.

Kevin Cate wrote: "Moments ago, @GovRonDeSantis let someone stand behind the Seal of Florida and say: 'The ***vaccine*** changes your RNA.' It does not. No corrections. No shame."

Miami-Dade County Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** also corrected the record: "Fact check: No, the ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** does not alter your RNA. The ***vaccine*** is safe and effective and over 200 million Americans have now received at least one dose."

The video clip is courtesy of The Florida Channel. You can view the entire press conference here: [*https://thefloridachannel.org/videos/9-13-21-governors-press-conference-on-****vaccine****-mandates/*](https://thefloridachannel.org/videos/9-13-21-governors-press-conference-on-vaccine-mandates/)

**Load-Date:** September 14, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Florida ready to fine cities, counties 'millions' for requiring employee vaccinations*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:63KV-XHT1-JC3J-X4JJ-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

September 13, 2021 Monday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** state\_politics

**Length:** 1031 words

**Byline:**  Lawrence Mower

Miami Herald

**Dateline:** TALLAHASSEE

**Body**

Gov. Ron DeSantis said Florida will fine local governments $5,000 for each employee who is required to be vaccinated, threatening some cities and counties with millions of dollars in penalties for adopting strict ***vaccine*** "mandates."

During a Monday news conference in Alachua County, DeSantis vowed to fight Gainesville's requirement that employees be vaccinated by the end of the month or be fired.

"We are not going to let people get fired because of the ***vaccine*** mandate," DeSantis said. "You don't just cast aside people who have been serving faithfully over this issue, over what's basically a personal choice over their individual health."

The result could be the state imposing millions of dollars in fines under a new state law barring Florida businesses and local governments from requiring proof of a ***vaccine*** "to gain access to, entry upon, or service from the governmental entity's operations in this state." A new Department of Health rule enforcing the law is set to take effect Thursday.

Gainesville, Orange County and Leon County have each passed requirements that employees be vaccinated or be fired, with exemptions for religious or medical reasons. DeSantis noted that Orange County has thousands of employees.

"That's millions and millions of dollars potentially in fines," DeSantis said.

Speakers at DeSantis' event object to ***vaccine*** mandate but cite misinformation, too

Other counties and cities, such as Miami-Dade and Tampa, have adopted less onerous approaches, requiring employees be vaccinated or submit to weekly tests. DeSantis' spokesperson did not respond when asked whether the $5,000 fines would apply to that policy.

Miami-Dade County says this will not apply to it because it doesn't require vaccines. It requires testing, but you can opt out if you have proof of vaccination.

"The policy he announced are for governments requiring vaccines," said Rachel Johnson, communications director for Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava***. "If that's the case, it shouldn't have any impact on our policy, which is just requiring testing with the option to opt out if you are vaccinated and choose to present the information that you are vaccinated."

Although the fines also apply to private businesses that require proof of vaccinations, DeSantis' administration wouldn't say Monday whether they would be subject to the fines. Walt Disney World, for example, is requiring all union employees to be vaccinated by Oct. 22. Both Disney and Royal Caribbean also said they will require passengers to be fully vaccinated before boarding their cruise ships.

"Regarding private businesses, we're looking at all legal options to protect the rights of employees," DeSantis spokesperson Christina Pushaw wrote in an email.

Gainesville employees suing over mandate

In Gainesville, more than 200 employees, including police and firefighters, have sued the city. Some of those employees said Monday that they were fighting the requirement on principle. They also expressed skepticism over the safety of the vaccines, while DeSantis stood next to them.

"The ***vaccine*** changes your RNA, so for me, that's a problem," said Darris Friend, who said he's about a year and a half away from retirement after 22 years with the city. "It's about our freedom and liberty. It's not about the ***vaccine***."

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention states clearly that the vaccines don't "change or interact" with DNA in any way. The Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna vaccines both include messenger ribonucleic acid, or mRNA, which is a molecule that carries the code that trains your body to build immunity against ***COVID***-19.

Christine Damm, who has worked for the city for 10 years, said her four children lost their grandmother last year, although not from ***COVID***.

"I will not put my children through the possibility of losing another maternal figure in their lives," she said. "My family means everything to me. My body, my choice."

The CDC has said reports of death following ***COVID***-19 vaccination are exceptionally rare.

DeSantis announces monoclonal antibody treatment at South Florida siteFlorida Gov. Ron DeSantis announced that the C.B. Smith Park site in Broward County will be offering monoclonal antibodies in an effort to curb severe disease and therefore hospitalizations and deaths from ***COVID***-19.

State, federal policies at odds

DeSantis has fought cities, counties, schools and cruise ship operators from adopting ***mask*** or ***vaccine*** requirements for employees and customers over the last year. He vowed again Monday to challenge President Joe Biden's plan to require businesses with more than 100 employees to confirm all of their workers are fully vaccinated or require them to submit to weekly ***COVID*** tests.

DeSantis said requirements like Gainesville's are against science because they don't include provisions for people who have already had ***COVID*** and developed natural antibodies to the virus.

"Many of them have already had ***COVID***, OK?" he said. "They've had ***COVID***, they've recovered, and most of them -- well, the ones who have recovered -- have very strong immunity."

A spokesperson for the City of Gainesville said the city was standing by its policy.

"The health, safety and welfare of our city's workforce and those we serve is our number one priority," spokesperson Shelby Taylor said. "The city has taken the steps necessary to achieve that priority and stand by that decision. It is our belief that as an employer, we retain the right and responsibility to require vaccinations as a condition of employment."

Attorney General Ashley Moody, who filed an amicus brief supporting the employees suing the city, said the requirement was "unlawful."

"You now have the attorney general in the state of Florida in your corner," she told employees at Monday's event.

Jon Cicio, a search and rescue specialist for the city, said he felt "betrayed" by the city just months after being sent to Surfside to look for victims in the Champlain Towers South collapse earlier this year.

"While we were heroes and selfless not long ago, now we're selfish," Cicio said. "We need to stand up and fight."

Herald/Times Tallahassee Bureau staff writer Ana Ceballos and Miami Herald staff writer Douglas Hanks contributed to this report.

**Load-Date:** September 14, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*DeSantis on the trail, landslide of lawsuits continues, 'anti-riot' law paused*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:63KP-XKC1-DYJM-M0M3-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

September 13, 2021 Monday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** politics\_policy\_in\_sunshine\_state

**Length:** 1730 words

**Byline:**  Mary Ellen Klas

Newsletters |

**Body**

It's Monday, Sept. 13, and this week marks 18 months since ***COVID*** lockdowns first happened in Florida and across the nation.

We have a successful ***vaccine***, but just 55% of the state's population is fully vaccinated. The CDC reports that in every county in Florida the level of community transmission of ***COVID***-19 is high.

Cases appear to have plateaued, but the virus killed a Floridian every four minutes on average the first week in September. Last week, the state verified 2,448 ***COVID*** deaths, including four children, and the highest number since the pandemic started.

WHAT WE'RE WATCHING

DeSantis on the trail: The governor took a break from pushing monoclonal antibody treatments and last weekend continued his yet-to-be announced re-election campaign. He capped the week at a Pasco County Republican gathering on Friday, the Tampa Bay Times reported, and, according to Politico, he traveled to Nebraska City, Nebraska, on Sunday for another GOP event.

It's a two-pronged political strategy to keep DeSantis' name in circulation as a 2024 presidential contender while amassing a deep war chest (up to $55 million) for his needed re-election. On the stump, the governor never mentions the ***vaccine***, but proclaims he is ready to fight President Biden. He says Biden's plan to require workers at businesses with more than 100 employees to be fully vaccinated or take weekly ***COVID*** tests is unconstitutional.

'Purely manufactured': The governor is increasingly greeted at news conferences with questions from an assortment of people that frame the issue in a way that fits into his latest talking points. It happened last week, when the governor was asked what he thought of the talk that he was positioning himself to run for president in 2024. DeSantis answered: "All the speculation about me is purely manufactured," he said. "I just do my job. We work hard."

Moody chimes in: DeSantis won't be alone in making Biden the opponent in the run-up to 2022, or in the courtroom. Florida Attorney General Ashley Moody tweeted on Friday that Biden "does not have the legal authority to force vaccines on millions of Americans'' and said her office would take "any and all action" possible to stop it. Biden's response: "Have at it."

MIA\_BidenSurfsideNinelnewADD.JPGPresident Joe Biden during a meeting with officials at the St. Regis Hotel on Thursday, July 1, 2021, after the collapse of the Champlain Towers South Condominium in Surfside. Florida Governor Ron DeSantis (L) and Miami-Dade Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** (R) are seated with the president.

Lawsuit avalanche: Meanwhile, lawsuits and court rulings continued to cascade down on DeSantis last week as he had his ban on ***mask*** mandates stopped and then resumed. A federal court refused to dismiss a lawsuit filed by parents of children with disabilities who argue that the governor's ban puts their children at risk of becoming ill or dying from ***COVID***-19. And three school boards asked the state Division of Administrative Hearings to overturn the ***mask*** mandate.

***Mask*** volley: On Wednesday, the same Leon County Circuit Court judge who blocked DeSantis from enforcing a ban on strict ***mask*** mandates in schools two weeks earlier, vacated an automatic stay on the ruling. By Friday, DeSantis won approval to put a hold on that ruling. The court battle continues, but the decision means the state can continue to punish school officials who impose ***mask*** mandates without a parent opt-out.

***Mask*** war is far from over: Late Friday, the Biden administration announced the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights launched a federal civil rights investigation to determine whether the state's ban on a ***mask*** mandate in schools discriminates against students with disabilities, who are guaranteed under federal law access to a public school education.

IMG\_download\_\_1\_.jpg\_3\_1\_EP9C2TEI\_L257453485Miami-Dade Schools Superintendent Alberto Carvalho.

'Political chess game': On CBS's Face the Nation on Sunday, Miami Superintendent Alberto Carvalho underscored that Miami-Dade schools will continue to mandate masks regardless of the latest legal volley. "I am concerned for our kids,'' he said. "They are being used as political pawns in this political chess game and that is reprehensible."

Work-arounds: But the work-arounds are underway. When asked whether Biden's ***vaccine*** mandate could backfire, Carvalho replied: "Local governments, school teachers, superintendents and school board members need to step up to provide an echo and a chorus of reason in our communities."

$275 for vaccinated teachers: Last week, the Miami-Dade School Board approved a one-time stipend of $275 for employees who show they are fully vaccinated against ***COVID***-19.

And the Biden administration announced on Thursday the creation of a grant designed to cover fines or other funds withheld from school districts over their ***mask*** policies.

Misjudging risk: This is worth a shout-out: David Leonhardt of the New York Times summarized the odds of breakthrough infections last week. The bottom line appears to be: Vaccinated people are safer than they think they are, and unvaccinated people are in more danger than they tend to believe.

WHAT WE'RE TALKING ABOUT

.desantis\_riot\_bill\_0.jpgEl gobernador de la Florida, Ron DeSantis, muestra su firma al promulgar el proyecto de ley de la Cámara de Representantes 1, la ley "antidisturbios". OFFICE OF GOV. RON DESANTIS

Walker dismantles anti-riot argument: The so-called anti-riot bill, a centerpiece of the governor's yet-to-be-announced re-election effort, was dealt a blow in another federal court as Judge Mark Walker of the U.S. Northern District imposed a temporary stay on the law's definition of "riot" as the legal challenge plays out.

Walker ruled the law "empowers law enforcement officers to exercise their authority in arbitrary and discriminatory ways" and is a "'a trap for the innocent." He ordered that the law could not be enforced in Broward, Leon and Duval counties -- the counties being sued by a group of left-leaning organizations.

The state's brief included a flyer for a Junteenth celebration this year as proof that the law has not had a "chilling" effect on free speech or protest. The flyer promoted the celebration commemorating the end of slavery on June 19th, which this year was observed as a federal holiday for the first time.

IMG\_IMG\_0232\_9\_1\_C5D7TCEA\_L370582169 (1).JPGFederal Judge Mark Walker

Walker challenged the analogy. "It should go without saying that a public gathering of Black people celebrating "Black joy" and release from bondage does not automatically equate to a protest -- or something that the Governor apparently implies should be chilled by the new riot law if Plaintiff Chainless Change's claimed injury is to be believed," he wrote. Then, tucked away in the footnotes, Walker added: "If Governor DeSantis included this particular [Juneteenth] post to imply that any gathering of Black people in a public space is a de facto protest, Plaintiffs' concerns about the how the statute's new definition of 'riot' will be enforced are indeed well-founded," he wrote.

simpson.jpgFlorida Senate President Wilton Simpson has said lawmakers are "already working on" a "heartbeat bill" that bans abortions after about six weeks.

Simpson runs for ag chief: Florida Senate President Wilton Simpson, an egg farmer and business owner from Trilby in Pasco County, confirmed what has long been expected last week and announced he is running for agriculture commissioner. He instantly became the top Republican for the seat currently held by Democrat Nikki Fried, who is running for governor.

Simpson may be busy next session as he positions himself for a run. Last week, he said that lawmakers are "already working on" a so-called "heartbeat bill" after the U.S. Supreme Court ruled the Texas' six-week abortion ban will stay on the books.

423013\_KEEL\_7\_FLGOV.jpgFlorida House Speaker Jose Oliva, R-Miami Lakes.

Oliva's abortion warning: In a Tweet this weekend, former House Speaker Jose Oliva, a Miami Lakes Republican, warned his former legislative colleagues of following Texas' approach. "I would respectfully advise my pro-life former colleagues of the House (of whom I count myself among) to defend the unborn but not through legal contraptions as seen in the current Texas law,'' he wrote. "We do not strengthen public interest by weakening its institutions."

He also admonished Democrats for supporting ***vaccine*** mandates: "A momentary win, at any cost, will lead to a cost no defender of the long-term public interest should advocate,'' he wrote. "Break-downs beget break-downs. Our form of representative gov't is cumbersome but it is the only form that guarantees freedom."

Saudi Florida questions: After President Biden issued an executive order for the FBI to release classified documents related to the 9/11 terrorist attack, the agency on Saturday made public a previously classified April 4, 2016 "review and analysis" report about Operation Encore, the bureau's highly sensitive investigation of possible Saudi complicity. Credit must go to the Florida Bulldog publisher Dan Christensen, whose has been on a crusade, along with former U.S. Bob Graham, to get the federal government to release the documents. Twenty years after the attacks, questions linger about a Saudi family that disappeared from Sarasota, before the terrorists hit their targets.

2hmSR7pH\_400x400.jpgFlorida state Sen. Lauren Book

Book removed from post: When Sen. Lauren Book became Senate Democratic leader last spring, it was only a matter of time before Simpson, a Republican, removed her from her chairmanship role on the Senate Committee on Children, Families and Elder Affairs. Last week, he announced the shift, along with a handful of other revised assignments. Simpson replaced Book with Sen. Ileana Garcia, R-Miami.

Stay well and we'd love to hear from you. Miami Herald Capitol Bureau Chief Mary Ellen Klas curates the Politics and Policy in the Sunshine State newsletter. If you have any ideas or suggestions, please drop me a note at [*meklas@miamiherald.com*](mailto:meklas@miamiherald.com)

Special offer: The Miami Herald needs your support if we are to continue to supply the meaningful local journalism you count on during these unprecedented times. We've lowered our monthly rate for unlimited digital access to $.99 a month. Check it out!

Know someone who'd like to get this newsletter? Send this to a friend to receive it weekly.

**Load-Date:** September 13, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Death of Levine Cava's father a sad reminder that masks, vaccines are 'acts of kindness' | Editorial*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:63HY-5WD1-JC3J-X1BT-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

September 4, 2021 Saturday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** editorials

**Length:** 507 words

**Byline:**  the Miami Herald Editorial Board

Miami Herald

**Body**

Condolences are in order for Miami-Dade Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava***, whose father, Paul Levine, died Thursday at 87.

What took his life is tragically familiar at this point: Levine Cava announced that her father died of complications from ***COVID***-19. Less typical, however, is that she says he was fully vaccinated. Generally, the delta variant that is spreading through the region, the state -- the country -- has made far fewer vaccinated people severely ill, striking -- and killing -- instead younger, mostly unvaccinated residents.

The mayor humbly acknowledged that again, ***COVID*** hit home -- this time, her home -- and for the second time. Levine Cava herself had the coronavirus.

"We are just one more family affected by ***COVID***."

Levine Cava said that her father suffered from dementia, but otherwise was in good health. He lived at The Palace Nursing & Rehabilitation Center, a respected, five-star senior-living complex in Kendall, and often refused to wear a protective ***mask***. He became ill more than a week ago and was admitted to Baptist hospital, where he eventually died. And like so many other Floridians with elderly loved ones in hospitals or other facilities, Levine's family was unable to be with him.

"We saw him through the glass door of his room," Levine Cava said. "We were not allowed to go in."

This is just one more curse of this highly contagious virus.

At first, the family didn't suspect ***COVID***, the mayor said, since staffers who were both vaccinated and masked. Still, his family suspects Levine may have contracted the virus from an asymptomatic healthcare worker who had ***COVID***, perhaps unknowingly, as well. At this point, this is the family's assumption.

However, the sad reality statewide is that many healthcare workers remain unvaccinated and, therefore, a threat to their patients and others if not masked and regularly tested. In fact, President Biden wisely announced a ***vaccine*** mandate for all nursing-home workers, requiring that they must be vaccinated as a condition for facilities participating in the Medicare and Medicaid programs.

"If you visit, live or work in a nursing home, you should not be at a high risk for contracting ***COVID*** from unvaccinated employees," Biden said in August.

It's a case that the Editorial Board has made time and again.

During a recent virtual discussion with the Miami Herald Editorial Board, doctors and nurses from Baptist Health, Jackson Health System and Nicklaus Children's Hospital told us they feel they failed in their messaging to the public of the necessity to be vaccinated.

As we approach 50,000 deaths in Florida, we urge hope members of this community to take their message to heart: Getting vaccinated is an act of kindness toward others.

Rise in ***COVID***-19 cases sees hospitalizations spike inside South Florida hospitalsDr. Aharon Sareli, Chief of Critical Care Medicine, speaks during a press conference at Memorial Hospital Miramar on Friday, July 30, 2021. He explained how the recent spike in ***COVID***-19 cases across South Florida has increased hospitalizations.

**Load-Date:** September 7, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*DeSantis' COVID fall out; Tiffany Carr payback; Election fraud plea deal*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:63GP-NMB1-DYJM-M420-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

August 30, 2021 Monday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** politics\_policy\_in\_sunshine\_state

**Length:** 2180 words

**Byline:**  Mary Ellen Klas

Newsletters |

**Body**

It's Monday, Aug. 30, and another school week begins as the politics of ***COVID*** has started to shift.

Gov. Ron DeSantis found himself on the losing side of the lawsuit against ***mask*** mandates on Friday. The ruling is likely to take effect on Tuesday, but it may have marked the turning point in the politics of the coronavirus.

For a governor who was riding a national wave of popularity over his handling of the pandemic at the beginning of the summer, all the signs last week signaled that a majority of Floridians now appear to be siding against the governor.

WHAT WE'RE TALKING ABOUT

Defiant red counties: The first sign came on Tuesday when Indian River County followed Sarasota County and became the second red county to defy the governor and impose a ***mask*** mandate in public schools.

There are now 10 schools districts in the largest regions of the state whose school boards have ordered that teachers, students and staff wear face coverings in school as community spread of the delta variant continues. Together, they comprise a majority of the state's public school students.

Dropping poll numbers: The next sign arrived with the Quinnipiac University poll, which found that a majority of Floridians were not happy about the Republican governor's handling of the pandemic. Pollsters found that 59% think ***COVID***-19 in the Florida is out of control, 61% said the recent rise in ***COVID***-19 cases in the state was preventable, and 60% said they disagree with DeSantis and want students, teachers, and staff to be required to wear masks in schools. The worst news for the governor, however, is that a plurality of Florida voters said DeSantis is hurting efforts to slow the spread of ***COVID***-19 in the state -- 46 percent to 41 percent -- instead of helping it.

sens.jpgFlorida U.S. Sens. Marco Rubio, left, and Rick Scott

Republicans won't join fight: GOP internal polls must be showing a drop in public opinion too because both of Florida's Republican senators came out and distanced themselves from the governor and his decision to put personal freedom over collective responsibility. Sen. Marco Rubio told the Miami Herald the ***mask*** debate was "a waste of time." And Sen. Rick Scott distanced himself from DeSantis' ban on ***vaccine*** passports, saying "the private sector has the right to make their own decisions."

Court defeat: Leon County Circuit Judge John Cooper dealt the final blow of the week when he ruled Friday that school districts can enforce temporary ***mask*** mandates to contain the spread of ***COVID*** -19 and, to the surprise of the defendants, he used their own argument again them.

Exception to parental rights: In a verbal ruling from the bench, Cooper concluded that the governor and his legal team failed to properly read the Parents' Bill of Rights, which they used as the foundation for their argument that parents, not schools, should decide whether children must wear facial coverings. The judge said they overlooked a critical paragraph in the new law: The one that allows school districts to make an exception when a requirement "is reasonable and necessary to achieve a compelling state interest."

VirusOutbreakFlorida (4).JPGMiami-Dade schools Superintendent Alberto Carvalho, center, walks with students Oliver Angel, left, and Ariah Olawale, right, outside of iPrep Academy on the first day of school, Monday, Aug. 23, 2021, in Miami. Schools in Miami-Dade County opened Monday with a strict ***mask*** mandate to guard against coronavirus infections.

The result, he said, is that the governor tried to unlawfully block ***mask*** mandates by improperly invoking and selectively enforcing the new law.

Appeal coming: The governor's office quickly denounced the ruling as the work of "incoherent justifications," and said they would appeal the lawsuit to the more right-leaning appellate court.

Punishing defiant superintendents: But the governor and legislative leaders are already considering ways to punish superintendents and school boards in the 10 counties that defied his July executive order blocking school ***mask*** mandate. The governor has not specified what the consequences will be to enact penalties on the rebellious school districts, but one option is to expand an existing law. That would require a special legislative session. There are significant legal hurdles.

file BRD\_8\_presser\_ttFile--Manatee County Schools Superintendent Cynthia Saunders discusses the '***Mask*** Up for Manatee Coalition' comprised of the county government, the county health department, the school district and local business partners, nonprofits and health care agencies. A new ***mask*** mandate with an opt-out provision was approved by the school board.

Punishing isn't popular: According to the Quinnipiac poll last week, punishing school districts and officials is not popular, even within the governor's own party. Pollsters found that 69% of all Floridians think punishing school officials is a bad idea, including 52% of Republicans surveyed and 70% of independent voters.

IMG\_cruise\_2\_1\_C4FEOM8B\_L455544598.JPGThe Fantasy docked at Disney's Castaway Cay in the Bahamas in March 2012. (Joe Burbank/Orlando Sentinel/TNS)

Disney also defies DeSantis: Disney Cruise Line announced last week that it will will require all passengers to be fully vaccinated in order to sail to the Bahamas, which requires anyone disembarking from a cruise ship to show proof of vaccination. The move made Disney the third cruise line to defy the state's ban on ***vaccine*** passports. A federal court recently ruled in favor of Norweigian Cruise Line and blocked the law from taking effect. Carnival Cruise line has also required passengers to show proof of vaccination.

Records keep breaking: Meanwhile, Florida continues to break records in terms of new cases and ***COVID***-19 deaths. On Thursday, the state reported to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention that 27,584 ***COVID***-19 cases had been added. It was another new single-day record for newly-reported cases. Florida's average daily death counts also remain the highest they've been during the entire pandemic, according to Miami Herald calculations of CDC data.

Nursing home cases soar: The governor's pandemic strategy was to focus on vaccinating the elderly who were at higher risk of serious disease, and diminish the focus on younger people who were less likely to need hospitalization. But his success with vaccinating elders was worse than all but one state, and even worse among staff. Now, as nursing homes have low staff vaccination rates, resident cases and deaths are rising. For the week ending Aug. 15, there was a 715% increase from the 134 cases reported during the week that ended July 4.

Ivermectin\_drug\_RapidEye\_Getty\_Images\_1\_large.jpgIvermectin

Dewormer derangement: An anti-parasitic medication, commonly used as a dewormer for cows, horses and other livestock, has become the latest unscientific fad used to treat ***COVID***-19. Sales of ivermectin have gone up so much that the Food and Drug Administration put out a warning and Florida's poison control center has seen calls to the center increase 282 percent.

It turns out that the same doctor the governor turned to conduct a July closed-door discussion to discourage ***mask*** policies in schools, California psychiatrist Dr. Mark McDonald of Los Angeles, is also an expert on ivermectin. He has promoted its use as a drug for ***COVID*** patients.

US-NEWS-CORONAVIRUS-FLA-31-MI.JPGFlorida Surgeon General Scott Rivkees speaks to the media about the coronavirus during a press conference on Monday, March 2, 2020, at the Florida Department of Health in Miami-Dade County.

Rivkees leaves: The state's top doctor is parting ways with the governor. Scott Rivkees, Florida's surgeon general and a pediatrician, announced he will be leaving the Florida Department of Health on Sept. 20. Rivkees has been notably absent from the DeSantis administration's public pandemic messaging efforts since the early days of the outbreak.

IMG\_0403261952.JPG\_2\_1\_N4HK1TS8\_L537308691Tiffany Carr -- shown during a 2004 visit to a Hollywood nail salon where she spoke on domestic violence -- was the longtime CEO of the Florida Coalition Against Domestic Violence.

Tiffany Carr agrees to pay: The state of Florida announced it has recovered $5 million of the $7.5 million paid to the former CEO of the Florida Coalition Against Domestic Violence, Tiffany Carr. She agreed to pay $2.1 million as a settlement to a lawsuit prompted by an investigation by the Florida House, working on information first disclosed by the Miami Herald. Carr was accused of cashing in funds intended to help victims of domestic abuse by getting some members of the coalition's board of directors to pad her salary through excessive paid time off.

WHAT WE'RE WATCHING

Brown ocean hurricane: Meanwhile, Floridians watched with worry as Hurricane Ida maintained its wind gusts, speed and movement as a "major hurricane" more than eight hours after making first landfall in Louisiana. Late Sunday, the National Weather Service was attributing the hurricane's sustained power to the "brown ocean effect," which occurs when a strong tropical storm meets extremely wet soil, which then releases a large amount of stored heat just as the ocean does, further fueling the storm's power.

DeSantis New Jersey fundraiser 82921.jpegGov. Ron DeSantis was in New Jersey Sunday, Aug. 29, 2021, for a fundraiser hosted by Joe Cayre, a businessman and member of Sephardic Jewish Community.

Fundraising in New Jersey: DeSantis spent Sunday in New Jersey, where he attended a fundraiser hosted by Joe Cayre, a video and music producer and real estate developer who got his start in Miami. The event was attended by "Sefardi moguls who also backed Donald Trump's run for President," according to the Twitter account of The Belaaz, a Jewish media outlet.

unnamed.jpg

Prisons to close: As a last-ditch effort by the agency to grapple with severe staff shortages, chronic under-funding, and a recent reduction in the inmate population related to ***COVID***, the Florida Department of Corrections will soon close multiple prisons in North Florida. The move is seen as a temporary fix without the long-term solution sought by a minority of vocal legislators for years.

Legislative budgeters meet: This week, an important committee of the Florida Legislature returns on Friday to launch the beginning of a series of important committee week hearings. The Legislative Budget Commission meets to hear the long-range budget outlook and take up a series of budget amendments for several state agencies. Among the agencies: health, health care administration, transportation, education and state. The Department of Corrections is not on the list.

Plea deal in Artiles case: What will Frank Artiles do now that no-party candidate Alexis Rodriguez took a generous plea deal in the Miami election fraud case? That is the question as for Artiles because Rodriguez is clearly cooperating with investigators. He will get 36 months probation and 12 months house arrest, compared to the 20 years in prison he faced before he agreed to cooperate.

Widening probe into Brodeur district? As investigators continue to probe the details in the Miami state Senate race, the Florida Department of Law Enforcement confirmed that it is also investigating allegations tied to another state Senate race in Central Florida: the Senate District 9 election won by Sen. Jason Brodeur, a Republican from Sanford.

Obama\_Rally\_MJO\_20.JPGFrom left to right: Miami-Dade Mayoral Candidate ***Daniella Levine Cava***, Debbie Mucarsel-Powell, (FL-26), Donna Shalala, (FL-27) and Debbie Wasserman Schultz, (FL-23), attend a Barack Obama drive-in rally in support of Joe Biden near Florida International University in Miami, Florida on Monday, November 2, 2020.

Shalala versus Powell primary? Redistricting remains the unknown, but we're getting word that a Donna Shalala versus Debbie Mucarsel-Powell primary is possible in the Miami-Dade district that is Florida's most competitive House seat.

210825\_NIST1.pngHere is a screen from a video released by the National Institute of Standards and Technology on Aug. 25. The video showed images of overcrowded column reinforcement and corrosion.

Surfside revelations: New footage released by a team of federal investigators last week offered more evidence of overcrowded concrete reinforcement and extensive corrosion in Champlain Towers South -- issues first raised by engineers as part of a Miami Herald investigation into the structural integrity and design of the building, which collapsed in June, killing 98.

Stay well and we'd love to hear from you. Miami Herald Capitol Bureau Chief Mary Ellen Klas curates the Politics and Policy in the Sunshine State newsletter. If you have any ideas or suggestions, please drop me a note at [*meklas@miamiherald.com*](mailto:meklas@miamiherald.com)

Special offer: The Miami Herald needs your support if we are to continue to supply the meaningful local journalism you count on during these unprecedented times. We've lowered our monthly rate for unlimited digital access to $.99 a month. Check it out!

Know someone who'd like to get this newsletter? Send this to a friend to receive it weekly.

**Load-Date:** August 30, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Need a late-night COVID test? Tropical Park has you covered with new 24/7 schedule*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:63G8-35R1-JC3J-X4XX-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

August 27, 2021 Friday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** coronavirus

**Length:** 440 words

**Byline:**  Devoun Cetoute

Miami Herald

**Body**

As Florida's ***COVID*** third wave surges, more and more residents are taking themselves to testing sites. To meet the demand, Tropical Park is extending its testing hours to 24 hours a day, effective immediately.

The move comes amid a growing number of ***COVID*** cases in Florida, fueled by the very contagious delta variant. Florida on Friday reported to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention that 27,584 ***COVID***-19 cases were added on Thursday, a single-day case record, according to Miami Herald calculations of CDC data.

As Miami-Dade County averages more than 24,000 ***COVID***-19 tests per day, the Tropical Park ***COVID***-19 testing site will be offering PCR testing non-stop, every day, the county said in a statement. The previous hours were 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Tropical Park is one of the testing sites with the highest demand.

"Increasing access to ***COVID***-19 testing is vital to detect the virus as early as possible," Miami-Dade County Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** said in a statement on Friday afternoon. "I'm proud that we are able to provide this important service 24/7 to Miami-Dade families, and grateful to Nomi Health for being willing to work around the clock to serve our community."

The change in hours also aims to help those with demanding work schedules, reduce wait times and increase access during the school year. Wait times currently average 15 minutes across county-led sites.

"We want to make sure our community has access to all the tools they need to protect themselves and their loved ones, and we encourage everyone to get vaccinated as soon as possible, if you haven't yet, to help us stop the spread," Cava said.

Over the last week, from Aug. 20 to Aug. 26, Miami-Dade reported 16,621 new resident cases, according to the Florida Department of Health's weekly report released on Fridays. The county has recorded totals of at least 627,423 confirmed cases and 6,472 deaths.

Out of Florida's 67 counties, state data shows Miami-Dade has the highest percentage of eligible residents who have received at least one dose of the ***vaccine***. About 86%, or 2,177,331 people, of those eligible are fully or partially vaccinated.

Tropical Park is operated by Nomi Health, which runs Miami-Dade's testing and vaccination sites. It is the first site in the county to be open 24 hours. Nomi Health also works in six other states.

"Giving the community 24-hour access to testing at Tropical Park is critical to Nomi's mission of ensuring everyone who needs a test can get one," said Ron Goncalves, general manager of Florida for Nomi Health. "We're honored to serve Miami-Dade amid the spike and do our part in helping keep the community safe."

**Load-Date:** August 28, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Police should be vaccinated. They are supposed to protect and serve, not protect and infect | Editorial*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:63FX-3HY1-JC3J-X332-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

August 26, 2021 Thursday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** editorials

**Length:** 562 words

**Byline:**  the Miami Herald Editorial Board

Miami Herald

**Body**

Miami Police Chief Art Acevedo has minced neither words nor tweets about how he feels about police officers losing their lives to ***COVID***. Unfortunately, there is little Acevedo can do to require more of his 1,400 officers to get vaccinated.

Still, Acevedo made a powerful statement on social media this week, tweeting to his 96,400 followers a photograph of condolence letters on his desk. He says he's mailing them to families of officers locally and across the country who have died in the past few weeks.

"Just signed 10 more condolence letters for active-duty officers who have been taken from their families, friends and colleagues by #COVID19. We are lifting them in prayer," the chief tweeted.

Acevedo Tweet Embed

Acevedo added, "Please let's all get vaccinated."

He has also hinted that a ***vaccine*** mandate might be coming soon to the department. But here's the catch: Acevedo is the chief, but any order requiring vaccinations for Miami police officers or other city employees must come from City Hall. Ditto for Miami-Dade Police Director Alfredo "Freddy" Ramirez, who would likely need the blessing of the county's top administrator -- Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava***. "The mayor would confer with the director if he saw the need for such a vaccination policy for his department," Rachel Johnson, the mayor's spokeswoman, told the Editorial Board.

It's unclear if either the city or county is considering such a measure. But shouldn't they? Police officers have sworn to protect and serve, not to protect and infect that public they serve.

Acevedo's tweet comes at a time when the law-enforcement community in South Florida, from corrections officers to court clerks, is seeing an alarming number of its members dying from ***COVID***-related issues or, at least, being sidelined for weeks.

According to a Miami Herald article, at least five law-enforcement officers in South Florida have died recently, a gripping testament to the delta-variant crisis.

For the safety of law-enforcement officers and the public they are sworn to protect, police officers should be vaccinated.

Miami-Dade's Ramirez appears to be on board, too. He recently told the Miami Herald he supports protecting his officers via vaccines.

Politicized debate

However, all across the country, federal, state and local government agencies have refrained from imposing blanket vaccination requirements on workers. To say it's a red-hot political issue would be a understatement. Witness the outrage over simple ***mask*** requirements.

Some local police unions have indicated they will fight such an edict.

Government entities are also well aware they are in the state of Florida, where Gov. DeSantis has threatened to cut school leaders' salaries in Broward and other counties for mandating masks.

But Acevedo and Ramirez do have the power to influence those above them -- mayors, city managers, commissioners. In fact, the latest uptick of ***COVID*** infections -- and deaths -- among the ranks should be the most persuasive argument of all.

California and the city of New York gave their workers a choice: Get vaccinated or face weekly testing. And an array of hospitals from coast to coast are declaring they will require staff to get vaccinated. So it can be done.

Acevedo and Ramirez know the dangers that criminals pose to their officers and the public.

***COVID*** poses a different kind of danger to them both, but is just as deadly.

**Load-Date:** August 26, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Miami-Dade is a hot COVID mess, but we have company all over Florida. Thank DeSantis | Opinion*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:63FN-G2V1-JC3J-X0G0-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

August 25, 2021 Wednesday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** fabiola\_santiago

**Length:** 783 words

**Byline:**  Fabiola Santiago

Miami Herald

**Body**

From Miami to Jacksonville, the tragic trail of new deaths from ***COVID***-19 is heartbreaking.

Police officers, young parents who leave behind children and people from all walks of life are dying, only this time with the realization, when it's too late, that they should have been vaccinated to prevent hospitalization and death.

Or, with the realization that, had they properly worn a ***mask***, a lesser viral load of the deadly delta variant might not have killed them.

The course of the coronavirus didn't have to play out this way.

But this is Gov. Ron DeSantis' Florida, and denial of the most basic mitigation tool, wearing a ***mask***, is the rule of law. And rejecting masks often goes hand-in-hand with ***vaccine*** hesitancy, a fatal combination.

We've learned nothing in this state with low vaccination rates from past surges of ***COVID***-19 infections, hospitalizations and deaths.

Terrible death statistics

Florida is averaging 227.6 deaths a day attributed to ***COVID***-19, another terrible statistical marker in this latest round of the war against the virus.

By comparison, 98 people died in the Surfside condo collapse that shook our state and made national and international headlines. By further comparison, 8.7 people a day die in traffic accidents in Florida.

How can there not be more outrage, more consciousness?

"Florida becomes first US state where the daily deaths in current wave have exceeded previous waves," Dr. Vincent Rajkumar, a Mayo Clinic cancer researcher and professor of medicine, tweeted Sunday.

Retweeting the doctor, Miami-Dade Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** added: "It doesn't need to be this way -- get vaccinated."

If only people would listen, but half the population is checked out of the conversation.

As an unvaccinated family member told me: "I'm just over all of it, to be honest."

I understand the feeling, but denial isn't what the times demand.

They call for more vaccination and less lament.

Why is this happening in Florida?

Rajkumar explains in simple terms on Twitter what has happened in Florida -- and why.

The delta variant was one of the factors "not in our direct control."

But what was under our control?

Vaccination -- and only half of Florida vaccinated "is simply not enough."

As of Aug. 22, 11,073,889 people -- 51.56% of Florida's population -- had been fully vaccinated.

In this scenario, "Relaxing ***mask*** requirements and preventing ***mask*** mandates is not good policy," Rajkumar said.

"What's different in Florida is that relative to the vaccination rate ... the relaxation of distancing and masking was disproportionately high. Leaders expressed disdain for masks and ***mask*** mandates," he tweeted. "The total number of people unvaccinated is high. And hospitals got overwhelmed."

Dr. Vincent Rajkumar of Mayo Clinic explains the why of Florida surge in ***COVID*** cases, deaths

This new round of ***COVID*** hospitalizations and deaths, even more than the first, is DeSantis' legacy, the result of his refusal to put public safety above politics, instead, turning mitigation of a health crisis into an issue of freedom and patriotism.

DeSantis fueled culture war over masks, ***vaccine***. So, of course, Florida leads ***COVID*** surge | Opinion

DeSantis likes to flaunt his own reckless, maskless behavior and, although the governor got vaccinated, he kept it secret until his spokesperson, hounded by the media, finally confirmed it.

"Politicians want to force you to cover your face as a way for them to cover their own asses. That's just the truth," DeSantis said last week. "They want to be able to say they are taking this on and they're doing this even though it's not proven to be effective."

But that's not what the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the World Health Organization, and the American Medical Association say.

He has misled the public so many times, I've lost count.

Most tragically, the governor boasted of a premature victory over ***COVID*** that all us watching new variants mutating in other parts of the world -- and paying attention to the science of virus evolution -- knew wasn't going to last unless all eligible Floridians were vaccinated.

And when things began to go south again, he invented himself a scapegoat: immigrants at the border and President Biden, a false GOP talking point circulated on Fox News.

Incredibly, DeSantis blames Florida ***COVID*** surge on Biden, immigrants. Scapegoat much? | Opinion

But the medical community, scientists and journalists know that Florida's emperor is wearing no clothes.

Elected by a 0.4% margin and catering to the ultra-right base with his policies, DeSantis gambled with ***COVID***-19 in Florida for political gain -- and he lost.

He failed the elementary science lessons.

In plain English: His ***COVID*** policies are killing Floridians.

**Load-Date:** August 25, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Do you need a mask in the library or city rec center? In South Florida, COVID rules vary*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:63FK-H091-DYJM-M3N0-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

August 24, 2021 Tuesday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** coronavirus

**Length:** 449 words

**Byline:**  Carli Teproff, Devoun Cetoute and Gwen Filosa

Miami Herald

**Body**

Need to check out a book? Visit city hall for a meeting? Go to a government-owned recreational center for a class?

If any of those activities are your plans, you may want to keep a ***mask*** handy.

Many municipalities across South Florida are again requiring masks, as ***COVID*** continues to spread at an alarming rate. And some are closing their indoor facilities and requiring people to pay bills and conduct other city business online.

Florida has seen a large increase in cases during the third peak of the pandemic. The state has broken numerous records for highest new increases in daily cases in August alone.

Here's a look at which municipalities have ***mask*** mandates:

Miami-Dade County

Last month, Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** instituted a ***mask*** mandate for employees and visitors going inside county facilities including county hall, libraries and courts.

The county had ditched the mandate in May, when the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommended that those who were vaccinated didn't have to ***mask***-up indoors.

Miami Beach

Masks are mandatory in all Miami Beach indoor city facilities regardless of vaccination status, officials say. All employees and visitors are required to wear masks.

"Ensuring the safety and health of Miami Beach residents, visitors and businesses during the ***COVID***-19 pandemic remains the city's most important objective," the city says on its website.

Broward County

Since July 30, all employees and visitors to Broward County facilities have to wear facial coverings indoors.

The county encourages people to practice social distancing whenever possible.

Davie

On Aug. 4, a mandate was put in place requiring all employees and visitors to its indoor facilities to wear a ***mask***, regardless of vaccination status.

The town provides disposable masks to visitors at Davie Town Hall, Pine Island Multipurpose Center, Public Safety Complex, and other town buildings. Visitors who refuse to wear a ***mask*** may be asked to leave.

Hollywood

The city of Hollywood of closed all city indoor activities and recreation to the public due to the spike in ***COVID*** cases and "elevated risk to public health."

The city is encouraging people to use online services found here.

Miramar

City administration reinstated ***mask*** restrictions for city buildings.

Monroe County

On Aug. 18, the Monroe County Commission voted to require employees and visitors to wear facial coverings inside county buildings unless someone can maintain social distancing or has a documented medical condition that prevents wearing them.

Key West

Since Aug. 2, the city of Key West has required visitors and staff to wear masks inside government buildings. The city also encourages people to practice social distancing at public meetings.

**Load-Date:** August 24, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*COVID in the workforce: Miami-Dade police, bus operators home sick as virus spreads*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:63DC-MTV1-JC3J-X2MB-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

August 19, 2021 Thursday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** miami\_dade

**Length:** 705 words

**Byline:**  Douglas Hanks

Miami Herald

**Body**

Miami-Dade's transit system is again feeling some strain from ***COVID***-19's spread -- this time without the emergency measures that increased the cleaning of buses and decreased the number of passengers aboard.

The county's Department of Transportation and Public Works on Wednesday said 63 bus operators were home due to ***COVID*** and that a bus technician died from it Saturday. The technician was not named. The county's transit union said a supervisor also recently died of the virus.

Miami-Dade police, paramedics and firefighters also are staying home due to ***COVID***, with the absences putting a logistical strain on two of the county's largest agencies.

"We have people out," said Miami-Dade Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava***. "That affects our ability to perform."

Miami-Dade Police said Wednesday that 180 employees are out due to ***COVID***, amounting to about 4% of the police department. Of those, 127 had tested positive and and the rest were awaiting test results.

The Fire and Rescue Department also reports about 4% of its workforce out with ***COVID***, with 122 employees either testing positive or awaiting results.

With roughly 1,600 bus operators on staff, 63 county bus operations out due to ***COVID*** also matches the 4% share of the workforce reported by police and fire agencies.

Miami-Dade transit ended its ***COVID*** emergency measures in June. That included free fares to limit passenger proximity to operators, emergency cleaning contracts, and capacity caps that had buses picking up fewer than half their regular load of riders.

Those measures were in place during last summer's ***COVID*** spike, when Miami-Dade transit reported at least 40 operators out with ***COVID*** and administrators said many more were home sick -- likely because of ***COVID*** as well.

This ***COVID*** spread faces off against a population with a high reported vaccination rate -- a central protection not available to passengers or transit workers last summer. It's not known how many transit workers are vaccinated.

Earlier this month, Levine Cava announced new ***COVID vaccine*** requirements for some county employees. Those take effect this week and require regular ***COVID*** testing for employees who aren't vaccinated.

The rules were designed to encourage more employees to get vaccinated, but they only apply to non-union county workers, which amounts to roughly 10% of a workforce topping 29,000 positions.

Levine Cava can't impose new restrictions on the county's unionized workforce, which includes most of the transit, police, fire and other departments. The mayor said she's hoping to expand the vaccination restrictions soon through union negotiations.

"The message is: Vaccinate, stay home if you're sick," Levine Cava said.

Miami-Dade continues to post the highest vaccination rate in state reports, with 83% of residents 12 and over having received at least one dose of ***vaccine***. Daily reporting by hospitals in the county also shows a ***COVID*** outbreak where patients with the virus occupy about 35% of the county's nearly 5,000 hospital beds and roughly 40% of available ventilators.

Miami-Dade reported about 10 ***COVID*** deaths a day at the start of August countywide, and five or fewer in recent days. That's better than when the virus was at its peak last summer, when the average was roughly 25 deaths per day.

Levine Cava said county hospitals estimate a plateau is near or already arrived in the latest ***COVID*** spike, and she's hoping renewed interest in vaccination will be more of a shield heading into the fall. "People got religion," she said. "Fear is a highly motivating factor."

In late June, Miami-Dade canceled contracts with sanitation companies providing extra cleaning on buses and Metrorail, part of a broader ramp down of transit emergency measures as ***COVID*** cases waned and immunization increased. Miami-Dade also stopped blocking off seats and reducing capacity in the vehicles.

***COVID*** measures in place now include plastic barriers between passengers and operators, UV light sanitation and air filtration systems already on buses and expanding soon to Metrorail trains.

Levine Cava said transit will focus on extra cleaning during the current ***COVID*** spike.

"We're going to be heavily cleaning," she said. "If we did have a hiatus, we won't have it anymore."

**Load-Date:** August 19, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Miami-Dade has a new rule for people who want a rapid COVID antigen test*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:63C9-T0J1-DYJM-M2VN-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

August 14, 2021 Saturday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** coronavirus

**Length:** 661 words

**Byline:**  Michelle Marchante

Miami Herald

**Body**

Anyone who is planning to get an antigen rapid test at a Miami-Dade County-run testing site will now also be required to get a PCR test, which is more accurate in detecting early ***COVID*** infections but takes slightly longer to process results.

The change, which kicked in Thursday amid high testing demand, was recommended by Miami-Dade County Chief Medical Officer Dr. Peter Paige to ensure people get the most accurate test results possible, county spokeswoman Natalia Jaramillo said Friday in an email to the Miami Herald. Both tests will be administered during the same appointment.

People who want a PCR test will not be required to get an antigen test, according to Miami New Times, which first reported on the updated policy.

The change comes as Florida sees a record-breaking number of new ***COVID***-19 cases and hospitalizations, fueled by the spread of the more contagious delta variant. Long lines are forming at popular test sites like Tropical Park and hospitals are seeing an influx of patients again, this time said to be younger and mostly unvaccinated.

Some hospitals, including Memorial Healthcare System in South Broward, have temporarily paused elective surgeries to help preserve space and staff to help care for ***COVID*** patients.

"The three best tools we have to combat the recent surge in our community are 1) vaccination, 2) testing and 3) wearing a ***mask***," said Miami-Dade Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** in a statement. "It's extremely important to identify positive cases as early as possible to help stop the spread, and this new policy will help ensure our community has timely, accurate information about ***COVID*** positivity."

Here's what else you should know:

What's the difference between an antigen and PCR test?

Antigen tests usually provide results within 24 hours, and sometimes results are available within an hour. Some at-home antigen tests, like the ones sold through CVS and Walgreens, give results within 15 minutes. However, antigen tests are less "sensitive," which means false negative results occur more often compared to PCR tests.

PCR test results, on the other hand, are usually ready within a few days. Sometimes, if you're lucky, results can arrive within a few hours, too. And yes, there are also at-home PCR tests you can buy through select retailers like CVS and Walgreens.

Remember, anyone who was in close contact (within 6 feet of someone for at least 15 minutes) with someone who tested positive for ***COVID***-19 should quarantine and get tested, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Fully vaccinated people don't have to quarantine unless they have symptoms and should be tested 3 to 5 days after exposure, regardless if they have symptoms or not, the CDC says.

You have antigen results but are waiting on PCR test. What should you do?

Miami-Dade County recommends that anyone with ***COVID*** symptoms isolate until they receive a negative PCR result. People who are asymptomatic should continue to follow key ***COVID*** precautions, including masking, social distancing and sanitizing.

How to find a ***COVID*** test site?

All state-run testing sites are closed, including the popular site at Hard Rock Stadium in Miami Gardens. County-run sites are still open. Select pharmacies like CVS and Walgreens, hospitals, clinics, urgent care centers and doctors' offices are also offering testing.

In Miami-Dade, the best way to find a free drive-through or walk-up test site is to use the county's online ***COVID***-19 test site locator to find one closest to your home.

Once you plug in your ZIP code, you can filter the site by a variety of factors, including what type of tests it offers and whether it's a drive-through or walk-up test site. The locator also gives information on every test site's hours, if appointments are required and if there is a minimum age (important if you want to test children).

Broward also has an online locator you can use to find a drive-thru or walk-up test site. Broward testing sites only offer PCR tests.

**Load-Date:** August 16, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*'Burning through the population': Delta fuels Florida's worst COVID wave*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:63BP-HSS1-DYJM-M361-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

August 11, 2021 Wednesday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** coronavirus

**Length:** 1686 words

**Byline:**  Ana Claudia Chacin and Daniel Chang

Miami Herald

**Body**

In a matter of weeks, the highly contagious delta variant of the virus that causes ***COVID***-19 has fueled the worst spike in new infections since the pandemic began in March 2020, according to an el Nuevo Herald analysis of state-level data.

Florida's ***COVID***-related hospitalizations have broken daily records for 11 days in a row, according to data published daily by the United States Department of Health and Human Services, with many hospital administrators moving to cancel elective procedures in order to save space and ensure staff and resources are available to care for the flood of new patients. The state has also shattered single-day records for new cases five times in past two weeks, including Wednesday when the state added 24,753 new cases.

Unlike the past surges of ***COVID***-19 cases, where the elderly made up the majority of severe cases, this new wave is increasingly affecting younger populations as well. In terms of the number of children hospitalized with ***COVID***-19, Florida has ranked among the two worst states in the nation and hospitals have been sounding alarms.

"This delta variant is burning through the population," said Jason Salemi, an epidemiologist at the University of South Florida who has tracked the state's ***COVID*** data since the beginning of the pandemic. "It's infecting a lot of people very, very rapidly."

Salemi also attributes this dramatic increase in cases to high numbers of individuals in Florida not being protected through vaccination (around eight million who are eligible), relaxation of measures that lower the likelihood of transmissibility, the summer heat driving people indoors and tourists.

New cases increased almost eightfold during the month of July and have more than doubled in the past three weeks, according to a Herald analysis using seven-day rolling averages of daily Florida Department of Health (DOH) case data published by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

MH\_FLcases\_throughAug8

'There's a lot of unknown'

The CDC tracks more than 18 lineages of SARS-CoV-2 in the United States, with the delta variant making up more than 85% of samples the agency sequenced during the last two weeks of July. Variants may carry mutations that make a virus more contagious or cause more severe symptoms or that evade the effectiveness of therapies and vaccines.

Data collected over a four-week period and published by the CDC suggest that through July 17, out of almost 4,000 positive tests collected in Florida sequenced, 65% were delta. Sequencing refers to studying a virus as it changes.

Recent studies also suggest that the delta variant is now the leading cause of infections in Miami-Dade County, making up more than 90% of infections among patients hospitalized at Jackson Health System and the University of Miami Health System, according to UM researchers and doctors tracking mutations of SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes ***COVID***-19.

Dr. David Andrews, a pathologist and UM professor leading the effort to sequence the virus in Miami-Dade, said the rapid takeover of the delta variant as the predominant strain circulating in South Florida is a hallmark of its increased contagiousness.

Andrews said scientists with the CDC and other health agencies around the world have been trying to measure just how contagious the delta variant of SARS-CoV-2 is, with some comparing the ease of spread to chicken pox.

DOH has never published information on variants, but under threat of a lawsuit from the Herald and a consortium of other news organizations, DOH now shares data on variants once a month.

That data, Salemi says, is problematic because it doesn't provide enough context to understand how prevalent any one strain is at any given time, since the data do not state when the samples were sequenced or how many of them went through the sequencing process.

What is clear from CDC data is that delta is the dominant ***COVID*** strain in Florida and across the United States.

"The degree of contagiousness and rate of transmission for the delta variant is completely off the charts compared to all the previous variants," Andrews said. "It is absolutely unprecedented."

Mary Jo Trepka, an epidemiologist and professor at Florida International University, says that while the high case counts of the current wave are comparable to the surge in January, that prior wave was driven primarily by a rise in test volumes from people preparing for the holidays.

But last month saw a 670% increase in Florida's seven-day rolling average of new cases from July 1 until the 31st, according to DOH data published by the CDC and analyzed by the Herald. During that same time, tests performed, as reported by the CDC, saw only a 118% increase in its seven-day rolling average, indicating the increase in new cases cannot be explained by an uptick in testing alone.

MH\_2graphs

Fueled by a much more contagious variant of the virus, this new wave has caused a much steeper increase in new cases and hospitalizations than in the past.

"People tend to be getting sicker, or at least becoming infectious slightly more quickly and then when they do become infectious, they're much more infectious because they're harboring so much more virus," said Salemi. This is making the surge of hospitalizations track closely behind the surge of new cases, according to Salemi.

"There's a lot of unknown," Trepka said of surging hospitalizations and the rapid spread of the virus, which have not shown signs of slowing down.

"I don't think that hospitals have seen their peak yet. That is a major problem. That is what we really have to be paying attention to. It's going to be really rough," she said.

Trepka said she is especially concerned with how widespread the surge is in Florida, which differs from previous waves that saw hot spots flare in the southeastern part of the state. Now hospitals are raising alarms in Jacksonville and Orlando in addition to South Florida.

"It's not like we can ship people from Miami to a neighboring county because the whole state is affected," said Trepka, citing last Tuesday's community profile report from the White House, which shows that 12 Florida counties, including Miami-Dade, are among the top 25 in the country in terms of highest percentage of ***COVID***-19 cases reported.

Counties with large populations like Miami-Dade and Broward are expected to be in the top range, said Trepka. But in Tuesday's report, even Polk County, where the population is roughly one-fourth the size of Miami-Dade's, ranked in the top 15.

"Now it is everywhere... and I think the reason is low vaccination rates in many counties in Florida," she said.

A much more contagious version of the virus also means that it will take communities longer to reach the threshold of so-called herd immunity, where the percentage of people immunized by ***vaccine*** or prior infection is so high that the virus can no longer find an abundance of hosts and the disease stops spreading.

"I am concerned that now with this much more infectious variant out there proliferating in the unvaccinated population, it's going to raise the bar for the degree of herd immunity required for us to get past this pandemic," said Andrews, the UM pathologist.

While the Infectious Disease Society of America had estimated a threshold of 60% to 70% for herd immunity for the original strain of the virus, the organization said this week that the spread of the delta variant had pushed that threshold up to 80% to 90%.

Less data: 'Flying blind'

The CDC publishes daily case counts for the entire state, but since DOH stopped daily reporting, the state agency is no longer providing that critical data to the public or to local leaders.

Recently some have publicly urged Gov. Ron DeSantis and the Department of Health to resume the daily reports.

"We would wish for more frequent reporting from the state so that we can do a better job of being on top of daily numbers," said Miami-Dade County Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** during a press conference with university presidents on Wednesday.

Recently, the county mayor called on Miami-Dade hospitals to begin reporting data on the number of patients hospitalized with ***COVID***, in ICUs, on respirators and other key metrics.

The county began publishing that data online last week, and Levine Cava said it will inform key decisions by her administration in the near future. On Aug. 5, Levine Cava announced a new policy requiring weekly ***COVID*** testing of all Miami-Dade employees who aren't vaccinated. The county government has a workforce of about 29,000.

"We have a lot of new factors and we're all doing the best we can to protect people," she said.

While being interviewed by CNN's Chris Cuomo last week, Miami Beach Mayor Dan Gelber said mayors were "flying blind in the midst of this huge surge."

What comes next?

Although he said it is important to get everyone vaccinated, Salemi added a massive campaign effort would come too late, and that implementing mitigation efforts in order to flatten the curve now would be more effective.

"Even if three million people were to get vaccinated tomorrow, if they're getting Moderna or Pfizer, it's five to six weeks before they're protected," he said. "It's not going to solve what's happening now."

Individuals cutting down on meeting in big groups and avoiding going to crowded places in the next month would be a big help, according to Trepka.

As for how long this wave will last, Salemi says that's probably a few more weeks.

"I just assume that there will come a point, whether it's the third or fourth week in August, that we will hit a peak because there are just so many people that will have either ***vaccine***-acquired immunity or infection- acquired immunity, and those people are going to start building up some immunity to the delta variant."

He said that, unless an escape variant emerges -- something that is very good at evading the ***vaccine*** -- this should be the last wave Florida experiences.

"At some point the numbers just won't be able to keep going up. There can't be enough people in the population, and then they will start coming down."

Miami Herald investigative reporter Sarah Blaskey contributed to this report.

**Load-Date:** August 12, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Need to visit a Miami courthouse? COVID has led to changes, so here's what to expect*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:63BF-X8B1-JC3J-X1PT-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

August 10, 2021 Tuesday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** miami\_dade

**Length:** 870 words

**Byline:**  Michelle Marchante

Miami Herald

**Body**

Miami-Dade County courthouses have had to make changes to accommodate an emergency ***shutdown*** of the historic downtown courthouse for repairs. The courts also have a ***mask*** mandate again because of the surge of ***COVID***-19 cases in Florida.

Both issues may affect your next court visit. Here's a guide:

Are the courts open?

masksignjuly28.JPGFacilities workers reinstall ***mask*** signs at Miami-Dade County's Stephen P. Clark Center in downtown Miami on Wednesday, July 28, 2021, minutes after Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** ordered a return to masking rules at county facilities for the first time since May.

All of the courts are open for in-person services, except for 73 W. Flagler St. in downtown Miami. The 1928 courthouse, which handles civil cases, was ordered closed for repairs in July after a building inspection found safety concerns. Employees are working remotely or have been transferred to other county courthouses.

Masks are required at all times while inside any Miami-Dade courthouse, regardless of your vaccination status. Anyone who does not have a ***mask*** will be given one. There aren't any other ***COVID***-19 related protocols in place right now. However, if someone who was recently inside a courthouse tests positive, the court system will do contact tracing and will then put out a notice.

To find hours of operations for each courthouse and to see the temporary work locations for some of the civil courthouse services, visit miami-dadeclerk.com/clerk/locations.page

***COVID***-19 cases in Miami courts cause dread as delta variant spreads across Florida

Where are civil trials and hearings being held?

Trials and hearings are temporarily being held at the Lawson E. Thomas Courthouse Center, 175 NW First Ave.; the Children's Courthouse, 155 NW Third St.; and the Richard E. Gerstein Justice Building (criminal courthouse), 1351 NW 12th St., according to the court system.

Is jury duty in-person or virtual? What's the dress code?

Jury duty is still predominately happening in-person. And while you might have fallen into the pandemic-style trend of wearing sweatpants to work, that doesn't fly with the courts.

The Miami-Dade County Clerk of the Courts office asks that you dress in appropriate business attire. You should also consider taking a jacket or sweater with you. Temperatures in the courts can get so cold, it can feel like the North Pole compared to Miami's sweltering heat. And because this is Miami, let's be clear: No shorts allowed. Oh, and the court also says no uniforms.

Appropriate attire is also still expected for Zoom court, though we know South Florida courts have seen their share of wardrobe mishaps during the pandemic.

A Broward County judge last year, for example, wasn't pleased with what he was seeing during virtual trials, including a shirtless male lawyer, a female attorney still in bed under the covers, and someone trying to hide that they were at the pool and in a bathing suit.

And in Miami zoom court, a woman didn't realize her camera was on and got nude. When a prosecutor said something, she freaked out and ran off.

naked woman zoom court

I need to get a marriage license, pay a parking violation or use another service. Can I go in-person?

The courts are open for in-person services though its recommended people use online services when possible, according to the Miami-Dade County Clerk of the Courts website.

Some of the things you can do online include paying a parking citation or a civil traffic infraction and requesting certified copies of eligible court records.

If you want to visit in-person, keep in mind that some departments might not accept walk-ins because of the pandemic. Marriage licenses, for example, can only be issued in-person by appointment only, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday.

The Clerk of the Courts has also created an appointment system to promote social distancing and expedite services in a variety of departments. Appointments can be scheduled online for the Marriage License Bureau, Parking Violations Bureau, County Recorder's Official Records, Criminal Felony Division and Traffic and Misdemeanor Courts Division.

Are virtual trials and hearings happening?

Yes.

"Civil & Family are largely virtual. Traffic is virtual. Criminal traffic is virtual except trials are in person. Criminal misdemeanors are virtual except trials are in person. Criminal felonies are both. Juvenile hearings are both," court spokeswoman Eunice Sigler said in an email to the Miami Herald.

Miami Zoom court: How does it work?

Speaking of virtual court, everyone has probably used Zoom at least once during the pandemic. But if you haven't or need a refresher, all you need is a smartphone though a computer or laptop with a webcam would be best (and more comfortable).

You'll be sent a link with instructions and then all you have to do is click the link and follow the prompts to enter Zoom court.

If you're lucky (or unlucky depending on how you see it), virtual court should go smoothly and shouldn't have anyone twerking, doing a strip tease or shaving their eyebrows.

8 tips for a great video call for workHere are some steps to ensure you have the best video conference call for work that you can ... and don't become "that person" in the next work-meeting-gone-wrong video.

**Load-Date:** August 11, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*DeSantis defends the unvaccinated. Schools, cruise lines and employers raise stakes. Hello sports bets. Farewell dear Bobby.*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:63B7-8MT1-JC3J-X4C8-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

August 9, 2021 Monday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** politics\_policy\_in\_sunshine\_state

**Length:** 2528 words

**Byline:**  Mary Ellen Klas

Newsletters |

**Body**

It's Monday, Aug. 9 and the week has not started well for Florida's governor.

Cruise line defeat: Late Sunday, a federal judge in Miami granted Norwegian Cruise Line Holdings' request for preliminary injunction against the Florida law sought by Gov. Ron DeSantis barring companies from requiring passengers to show proof of ***COVID*** vaccinations. The cruise company sued Florida Surgeon General Scott Rivkees in July, arguing the state law, which DeSantis pushed for before the latest ***COVID*** surge, puts passengers and crew at risk, violates federal law, and the company's constitutional rights. After hearing arguments on Friday, U.S. District Judge Kathleen Mary Williams blocked the state from enforcing the law against Norwegian when the company restarts cruises from Florida this month.

It was the second round in the legal battle with the powerful cruise industry. The governor won the first legal fight early this summer, when he successfully blocked the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention from enforcing its cruise safety rules in Florida. But DeSantis lost the battle when all cruise companies operating in Florida voluntarily imposed the CDC's regulations anyway.

The second reason the week didn't start well: ***COVID*** math is now taking its toll.

WHAT WE'RE WATCHING

Florida's ***COVID*** numbers lead nation: Florida broke another record for ***COVID*** cases in a 24-hour period on Saturday with 23,903 new ***COVID***-19 cases, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Friday was also a record-breaker with 22,783 new novel coronavirus cases. There are more people than ever in Florida hospitals who are sick with the virus. Statewide, 24.4% of all Florida hospital patients are classified as ***COVID***-19 patients -- compared with 8.7% nationally. As for ICU beds, 43.8% of those are taken up by ***COVID***-19 patients in Florida. Nationally, that number is 19.4%.

MIA\_02CHILDRENHOSPITAL\_CPJNicklaus Children's Hospital in Miami has seen a spike in pediatric ***COVID***-19 patients over the last three to four weeks. Of the 15 children hospitalized at Nicklaus Children's on Wednesday, Aug. 4, 2021, with ***COVID***-19, about half were under 12, with the youngest being 2 months old, said Dr. Marcos Mestre, chief medical officer for the hospital. Five of the children were in intensive care, he said.

Hospitalized kids: Florida also leads the nation in the hospitalization rate of kids who have been infected with ***COVID***-19. There are 0.76 kids being hospitalized per 100,000 residents, according to the CDC. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services reported Friday that 168 pediatric patients were hospitalized with laboratory-confirmed ***COVID***-19 in Florida..

Although cases have spiked across all age groups, a Miami Herald analysis of weekly case data revealed that the sharpest increase over the past month has occurred among kids under 12. The state has reported 15 deaths among children under 16. The most recent child to die of ***COVID***-19 was an unvaccinated 16-year-old who had no underlying health conditions. She died Thursday at Wolfson Children's Hospital in Jacksonville, the Florida-Times Union reported.

Unvaccinated = now more vulnerable: The governor continued to underplay the uptick in ***COVID***-19 cases and surge in hospitalizations last week as a "seasonal event." His staff celebrated the fact that bars and restaurants in Tampa and Miami were crowded. And, at an news conference with hospital administrators, the governor bypassed the grim numbers and focused on a treatment that state health experts say are keeping Floridians alive: monoclonal antibody treatments.

But the governor's suggestion that this was a predictable "seasonal pattern" fails to account for the fact that, unlike last year, 52% of all Floridians are vaccinated. Because the delta variant is twice as contagious as previous variants, because vaccinated people with symptomatic breakthrough infections can transmit it to others, and because fewer people are distancing and wearing face coverings than last year, simple math suggests that the unvaccinated half of the state -- especially children -- are more vulnerable than ever to ***COVID***-19.

***Mask*** madness: The statistics have an increasing number of school boards wary of outbreaks. A week after the CDC updated its guidelines to recommend that in places like Florida, where cases are surging, fully vaccinated people should wear masks indoors, DeSantis was also forced to back off his threat that school districts will have state funds withheld if they enforce a ***mask*** requirement.

The Florida Department of Health said Friday that school districts could mandate masks but had to give parents the option of opting out. The Florida Board of Education then adopted an emergency rule allowing parents to apply to transfer their student to another school if the child experiences "***COVID***-19 harassment" by a school's rules on masking, ***COVID*** testing or isolation.

Two parents asked the board if the new rule will allow them to apply for vouchers to send their kids to "safe schools that require masks." Board members did not answer.

MIA\_004PrinicpalMiriameStewNorth Miami Middle School principal Miriame Stewart visits the FIU All Stars summer school classroom on July 29, 2021. Stewart says she have over 800 students registered to return for the school year and that they are ready with hand sanitizer stations and other safety protocols. Stewart says that kids are consistent following the guidelines as long as the school is consistent, and she has had no issues with students not following the rules when it comes to masks. "My staff and my students want what's best for all of us and part of that is doing the right thing and keeping each other safe." Students pictured are front row L-R, Woody Anasthase, and Benedict Richeme. Back row L-R Bianca Mathurin, Elijah Mompremier, Shawn Jenkins and Andy Alexandre.

Schools requiring masks: Despite the governor's efforts, the list of school districts requiring kids to wear masks when school returns is growing. Broward and Palm Beach counties have imposed ***mask*** requirements, allowing parents to opt out. On Saturday, Hillsborough County schools required students to wear face coverings.

And a growing number of private schools, where some of the transferred students hoped to go, are also requiring face coverings. Among them: the Archdiocese of Miami, which last week issued a ***mask*** mandate for Catholic school students who are not fully vaccinated against ***COVID***-19, and Maclay School, the private Tallahassee-based school where some of the state's top elected officials send their children.

file\_2\_backtoschoolFILE--8-17-20--The Manatee County School District has recorded 33 cases of ***COVID***-19 among students and employees over the last two weeks, just before the start of classes.

The dilemma: Brown University's Ashish K. Jha explained why Florida children are more at risk of ***COVID*** than kids in other states. "Adjusted for population Florida had 12X as many kids infected as Massachusetts last week." He said that "while vaccination rates for kids under 12 are identical (0%) across states, infection numbers are not. In Massachusetts, about 250 kids under 10 years of age [were] infected last week. In Florida, it was about 9,000."

image.jpgCOVID-unit nurse Yaimara Cruz receives the Pfizer BioNTech ***vaccine*** at Jackson Memorial Hospital in Miami on Dec. 15.

The answer: The conclusion, he said: "Kid infection numbers [are] driven largely by infection numbers in adults. In Israel, we saw that as adults got vaccinated, infection numbers in kids plummeted....Very few kids in highly vaccinated places are getting sick. So if you want to protect unvaccinated kids, make sure everyone around them has the shot."

How's the delta variant affecting South Florida hospitals? ICU doctor, nurse respondDr. Andrew Pastewski and registered nurse Julio Valido, who were part of the Miami Herald docuseries 'Inside the ***COVID*** Unit,' discuss on July 23, 2021, what is happening at Jackson South one year after the filming for the documentary concluded.

***Vaccine*** mandates: Beginning the week of Aug. 16, Miami-Dade County will require weekly ***COVID*** testing of all county employees, a workforce of about 29,000 people. Those employees who wish to opt out can show proof of vaccination. As pediatric cases continue to surge, Nicklaus Children's Hospital in Miami announced it will require all employees and vendors to get vaccinated.

.certificate of compliance 2 (1).pngEngineer Sergio Breiterman's 1980 letter informing the Town of Surfside he had been hired as a special inspector for Champlain Towers construction.

Surfside revelations: A deeply-reported analysis of the construction and design of Champlain Towers by the Miami Herald reveals that, according to engineering, architecutural and design experts, the design of the building was inherently flawed and violated building code. "This is a piece of junk, this building," said a contractor who reviewed the analysis for the Herald. The design problems "should have been picked up by everyone."

They weren't. So that leaves some questions for state regulators and local officials: How many more buildings in Florida were built violating code? How many more inspections fail to find structural and design flaws? And what is being done about it? Florida's building booms have always favored developers over regulation. Will we now know at what cost?

Miami targets improvements: Miami-Dade Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** last week announced a group of local, state and federal officeholders will convene to recommend improvements to building-safety regulations after the condominium collapse in Surfside.

Inspection neglect: Meanwhile, more than a decade after a sprawling North Miami Beach complex known as Jade Winds was flagged for repairs as part of its 40-year recertification, the repairs remain incomplete and the building is occupied. It's the longest-standing unresolved recertification case among buildings flagged by the county in a post-Surfside audit.

WHAT WE'RE TALKING ABOUT

Legendary FSU head football coach Bobby Bowden dies at 91Legendary Florida State University Head Football Coach Bobby Bowden passed away in Tallahassee at the age of 91.

Goodbye Bobby: Legendary college football coach Bobby Bowden, who won two national championships and made the Florida State Seminoles matter, died Sunday at age 91. He was at home, surrounded by his family. Greg Cote reminds us Bowden is survived by "a legion of FSU fans to whom he willed a thousand memories." Dozens of them made a pilgrimage to his statue outside Doak Campbell stadium on Sunday, compelled by those memories.

IMG\_103hardrock16NEWPPP\_3\_1\_NHHE11ST\_L530456245.JPGA guitar-shaped hotel tower anchors the remade and expanded Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino near Hollywood.

Sports betting gets a go: Federal regulators on Friday quietly and passively allowed the gambling agreement between the state of Florida and the Seminole Tribe to take effect, opening the door for sports betting to begin on Oct. 15, and setting off potential battles in court and on the ballot over what direction sports betting will take in Florida. The Department of Interior ruled that it will neither approve nor deny the compact and so it will become effective upon the publication of the letter to the state and Tribe in the Federal Register, which is expected sometime this week.

Also expected are more lawsuits, in addition to the one pending from Magic City Casino. No Casinos, the non-profit organization formed to oppose gambling expansion in Florida, has already hinted it will sue, and there could be others legal challenges from Draft Kings and Fan Duel, the sports betting giants that were iced out of the deal with the state.

Campaigning with no campaign: DeSantis has not officially filed for re-election, but his official events increasingly have all the elements of a campaign event. Is the governor skirting the state law that prohibits state employees from using state resources to campaign? The experts say Florida law is vague, opening the door for "wink and a nod" arrangements.

Biden.JPGPresident Joe Biden has something small and yellow on his chin as he speaks during a meeting with governors to discuss ongoing efforts to strengthen wildfire prevention, preparedness and response efforts, and hear firsthand about the ongoing impacts of the 2021 wildfire season in the South Court Auditorium in the Eisenhower Executive Office Building on the White House Campus in Washington, Friday, July 30, 2021. An aide passed the president a note alerting him of something on his face and he wiped it away. (AP Photo/Andrew Harnik)

"Get out of the way" The White House offered coronavirus surge response teams and other federal resources to Florida and other states last week, an offer that has not been accepted by DeSantis. The next day, President Joe Biden delivered a rebuke to DeSantis and other GOP governors, saying: "I say to these governors please help. But if you are not going to help, at least get out of the way of the people who are trying to do the right thing. Use your power to save lives."

DeSantis responded by turning talk to the border wars, lashing out against Biden and suggesting that illegal border crossing by migrants arriving in Texas is "helping facilitate" the surge in ***COVID*** cases in Florida. He then used Biden's words as ammunition for a fundraising pitch.

Biden was asked by reporters to respond. He laughed and replied: "Governor who?"

Bonus bonus: The $1,000 pandemic bonuses going out to Florida's teachers, principals and first responders won't include a governor's logo after all, the state says, but it may include his signature. The Legislature decided to spend more than $400 million in federal coronavirus relief money on $1,000 "bonuses" to teachers, principals, police, firefighters and paramedics and included a provision that allowed for the governor to get credit.

MIA\_\_N2\_8611Congresswoman Maria Elvira Salazar of Florida's 27th District speaks about the current situation in Cuba during a press conference at the Hialeah Gardens Museum Honoring Assault Brigade 2506 located on 13651 NW 107 Avenue in Hialeah Gardens, Florida on Thursday, August 5, 2021.

Salazar draws opponent: Janelle Perez, a former GOP staffer for Miami Republican Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, announced she will run as a Democrat and challenge Republican U.S. Rep. Maria Elvira Salazar in Florida's 27th Congressional District. Salazar won the Democrat-leaning seat in 2020 by defeating incumbent Democratic Rep. Donna Shalala. The district is now likely to get rearranged again in redistricting.

Stay well and we'd love to hear from you. Miami Herald Capitol Bureau Chief Mary Ellen Klas curates the Politics and Policy in the Sunshine State newsletter. If you have any ideas or suggestions, please drop me a note at [*meklas@miamiherald.com*](mailto:meklas@miamiherald.com)

Special offer: The Miami Herald needs your support if we are to continue to supply the meaningful local journalism you count on during these unprecedented times. We've lowered our monthly rate for unlimited digital access to $.99 a month. Check it out!

Know someone who'd like to get this newsletter? Send this to a friend to receive it weekly.

**Load-Date:** August 11, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*'We are doing our part.' Miami-Dade mayor mandates COVID testing for unvaccinated workers.*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:639M-1FW1-DYJM-M36T-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

August 5, 2021 Thursday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** coronavirus

**Length:** 1326 words

**Byline:**  Daniel Chang

Miami Herald

**Body**

With more than 1,500 people hospitalized for ***COVID***-19 in Miami-Dade and the number of new patients growing daily, Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** and the top administrator for the county's public hospital, Jackson Health System, announced new policies on Thursday intended to persuade more of their employees to take the ***vaccine***.

Beginning the week of Aug. 16, Levine Cava said, the county will require weekly ***COVID*** testing of all Miami-Dade employees, a workforce of about 29,000 people. Those employees who wish to opt out, she said, can show proof of vaccination.

"This policy that we are announcing today will help ensure we are doing our part to maintain a safe, healthy workplace," Levine Cava said, "and that county employees are doing our part to prevent the spread of ***COVID*** across this community."

MIA\_02JACKSONCOVID\_CPJMiami-Dade Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** announces ***COVID***-19 testing of county employees amid a spike in hospitalizations and cases on Thursday, Aug. 5, 2021, at Jackson Health System's Ryder Trauma Center.

Levine Cava, who informed employees by email on Thursday, also announced a high-profile new hire for Miami-Dade: Jared Moskowitz, the former director of Florida's Division of Emergency Management who oversaw the state's pandemic response, including sending protective gear to healthcare workers, rolling out ***vaccine*** distribution and setting up testing sites. He will be a special adviser to Miami-Dade on ***COVID*** response.

At Jackson Health, which is owned by the county and employs about 13,000 people, CEO Carlos Migoya introduced a carrot-and-stick approach to boost vaccination among the estimated 5,200 employees -- about 40% of the workforce -- who have not taken the ***vaccine***.

Unvaccinated Jackson workers barred from cafeterias

Unvaccinated workers will be required to wear N-95 respirator masks at all times while indoors at any Jackson facility, which includes hospitals in Miami, North Miami Beach and South Miami-Dade, urgent care centers and community clinics. Those employees are also barred from entering any dining rooms, coffee shops and even the cafeterias.

In addition, unvaccinated employees will not be allowed to remove their masks to eat or drink anywhere indoors at Jackson Health, and those who get a shot by Sept. 30 will receive a $150 reward. Migoya said the policy will be in effect until "the end of the pandemic."

MIA\_09JACKSONCOVID\_CPJCarlos Migoya, president and CEO of Jackson Health System, announces new restrictions for unvaccinated employees at Jackson, including ***mask*** mandates and being barred from the hospital's cafeterias and dining rooms, on Thursday, Aug. 5, 2021, at Jackson Health System's Ryder Trauma Center. Jackson has seen its number of ***COVID*** patients nearly double to 320 on Thursday.

Jackson Health was the first hospital in Miami-Dade to receive the vaccination for distribution to healthcare workers and eligible patients in December, Migoya said. Since then, about 60% of the Jackson Health workforce has been vaccinated, with take-up highest among third-year medical residents (91%), attending physicians (78%) and clinical staff nurses (56%).

"Our employees have had countless opportunities to get vaccinated," Migoya said. "This new ***vaccine*** requirement for all Jackson employees may seem like a drastic measure, but it is critically important in order for us to save lives."

JHS 14-day trend Aug 5 2021.jpgThe number of ***COVID***-positive inpatients at Jackson Health System has risen rapidly in the last two weeks, from 166 people on July 23 to 305 on Thursday morning. By noon on Thursday, the number of ***COVID***-positive inpatients at Jackson Health had risen to 320.

The vaccination rate among Miami-Dade employees is less clear than at Jackson Health.

Levine Cava said the county polled employees last week through an anonymous survey asking them to self report their vaccination status. More than 5,000 employees, representing about 17% of the county's workforce, took the survey, she said. More than 83% indicated they had taken the ***vaccine***.

"We recognize those who have been vaccinated are probably more likely to take the survey," she said.

Still, the county's new testing policy is needed to ensure a safe workplace, Levine Cava said, and to reduce community spread of the disease. She said the testing requirement will begin with county employees who are not represented by a labor union, about 10% of the workforce, before rolling out to others.

"We have been working hard for months to make vaccines as successful as possible across Miami-Dade," she said, "and urging everyone to get the shot, including our employees."

Hiring Moskowitz, Florida's former ***COVID*** expert

In recent weeks, Levine Cava has expanded vaccination and testing with new sites around Miami-Dade and reinstated an indoor ***mask*** mandate at all county facilities. Hiring Moskowitz amid a meteoric rise in new cases and a surge in hospitalizations, she said, will help the county manage the crisis.

"He helped to lead the state through some of the worst chapters of the pandemic," she said, adding that Moskowitz will coordinate the county's ***COVID*** response together with Miami-Dade's fire rescue and other first responders and leaders at Jackson Health.

"He will advise us on our vaccination, testing and overall ***COVID*** strategy," Levine Cava said of Moskowitz.

MIA\_111DESANTISCOVID-19PRESFlorida's Division of Emergency Management Director Jared Moskowitz, next to Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, talks to the media at a press conference at the Broward County mobile testing site at C.B. Smith Park in Pembroke Pines on Thursday, March 19, 2020.

Moskowitz, who resigned as director of the state's emergency management agency in February, said that in addition to ensuring the ***vaccine*** is readily available for county residents, his priority at present is to improve surveillance for the disease with more testing.

"Testing is most urgent," he said.

Moskowitz, a former Florida House representative from Parkland, joins Miami-Dade at a moment when new cases, the rate of positive test results and hospitalizations are all rising in the county.

Though the county has a relatively high vaccination rate -- about 71% or 1.6 million eligible residents have taken the ***vaccine***, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention -- Miami-Dade has recorded an average of 490 new cases every day during the past week.

Much of the spread has been driven by the highly contagious delta variant, which now makes up more than 90% of virus samples taken in recent weeks from ***COVID***-positive patients at Jackson Health and the University of Miami Health System.

The delta variant has ripped through the state, producing record numbers of new infections for Florida in the past week. On Thursday, Florida reported 20,133 new cases, the second-highest single-day count since the pandemic began in March 2020.

Rising hospitalizations

As new cases rise, hospitalizations follow.

JHS 14-day age trend Aug 5 2021.jpgAt Miami-Dade's Jackson Health System, people aged 50 to 64 years old represent the largest group of patients hospitalized with ***COVID***-19. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported that Miami-Dade's vaccination rate for residents 18 and older was 74.4% on Aug. 4, 2021.

At Jackson Health, doctors and nurses thought they were beginning to see the end of the pandemic just four weeks ago, when a total of 66 patients were hospitalized with ***COVID***-19.

By July 23, that number had risen to 166 and by Thursday the number had nearly doubled to 320, Migoya said. Of those patients, about 11% were vaccinated and nearly all of them were immuno-compromised patients who had received an organ transplant.

The county's daily ***COVID*** hospital report showed that 191 new patients, including 22 vaccinated people, were admitted to a local hospital with a confirmed or suspected infection on Wednesday, raising the total number of people hospitalized in Miami-Dade with the disease to 1,504 patients, including 282 in intensive care units.

**Load-Date:** August 6, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*COVID hospital cases not at 2020 levels yet in Miami-Dade, but they're getting closer*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:638X-T8K1-DYJM-M1G3-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

August 2, 2021 Monday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** miami\_dade

**Length:** 1095 words

**Byline:**  Douglas Hanks and Daniel Chang

Miami Herald

**Body**

Miami-Dade hospitals face a growing challenge from the latest ***COVID*** wave, one where people who haven't been vaccinated are pushing admission levels closer to where they were during last summer's spike in coronavirus cases.

So far, Miami-Dade's major hospitals aren't facing quite the same pace of ***COVID*** admissions that hit them this time last year, according to reports Miami-Dade released Monday. The results come from new mandated daily reporting for all hospitals in Miami-Dade on ***COVID***-related data, including the portion of infected patients vaccinated for the virus.

On Monday, 24 hospitals in Miami-Dade reported 1,389 patients with ***COVID***, compared to about 1,800 a year ago. For now, 20% of ***COVID*** patients are being treated in intensive care units; a year ago, nearly 30% were in ICU wards.

Even if the hospital numbers aren't setting new records, administrators say they're preparing for worsening trends and already finding challenges with having enough employees for the added care and isolation needed for ***COVID***-19 patients.

"Staffing is very much an issue," said Dr. Sergio Segarra, an emergency physician and chief medical officer for Baptist Hospital Miami, one of the largest medical facilities in Miami-Dade.

About a third of ventilated patients in Miami-Dade have ***COVID***

For now, patients with ***COVID*** aren't overwhelming critical-care resources. The latest hospital report showed that of the roughly 550 ventilators in use, about a third of them went to patients with ***COVID***. Roughly 800 ventilators remain available countywide.

The starkest difference between the two summer surges comes from ***COVID*** vaccines, which didn't exist a year ago. Now they've been administered to about 71% of the population age 12 or older, according to Centers for Disease Control and Prevention statistics.

Though people who aren't vaccinated make up a minority of the county's population, they appear to dominate the population of ***COVID*** cases in Miami-Dade hospitals.

Almost 9 out of 10 ***COVID*** patients aren't vaccinated

The hospitals reported that since Friday, they've admitted 422 new patients with ***COVID***.

Of those patients, 45 were vaccinated -- meaning 89% of the new ***COVID*** patients haven't been vaccinated for the virus.

Of the 22 patients with ***COVID*** admitted into Baptist on Sunday, only four had been vaccinated, according to the county report.

The newly available daily statistics from Miami-Dade's major hospitals come from an emergency order Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** signed on July 28, reviving required reports from all hospitals on ***COVID*** admissions, the availability of ventilators and other pandemic-related data.

Levine Cava canceled the required reports in May as ***COVID*** cases were declining and the county lifted most masking rules. With cases spiking again, Levine Cava reimposed ***mask*** requirements at county buildings and ordered hospitals to resume daily ***COVID*** reports.

The county has only released three days' worth of data, from July 30 to Aug. 1. For this story, the Miami Herald compared numbers from the 24 hospitals to numbers the same hospitals reported at the end of July in 2020.

While the county's dashboard provides more insight into the resurgent pandemic's impact on local hospitals, the data do not reflect the stress on hospital staffing or the severity of illness among patients, said Segarra, of Baptist Hospital.

Baptist Health staffing stretched thin by ***COVID***

Unlike the early surges of the pandemic last year, Baptist Health has plenty of ventilators and surgical masks, gloves and other personal protective equipment for doctors, nurses and other healthcare workers, he said.

But the rapid rise in patients is stretching staff thin -- just two months after Baptist employees could see the pandemic waning.

"In June, we were as low as 18 to 19 patients in our entire hospital," he said. "We were closing units. Now, we have to open up 20-bed units on a weekly if not twice-a-week basis."

Baptist reported 211 ***COVID*** patients on Sunday at its main hospital in Kendall, with 28 needing intensive-care beds. A year ago, the hospital reported 231 ***COVID*** patients, with 99 of them in intensive-care wards.

As a precaution against rising cases, Baptist Health is postponing non-emergency surgeries that require overnight stays, Segarra said. Outpatient procedures continue to take place as scheduled, he said. But there's little question that Baptist Hospital, like others in Miami-Dade, is concerned about the trend.

"The growth that we're seeing is exponential," Segarra said.

Segarra said doctors are also seeing a surge in patients with ***COVID***-19 at the broad network of group practices and urgent care centers affiliated with Baptist Health South Florida, which owns Baptist Hospital Miami and operates 10 more hospitals in Monroe, Miami-Dade and Palm Beach counties.

Baptist Health reported 726 patients with ***COVID***-19 hospitalized across its network of hospitals on Monday. At the height of the pandemic for Baptist Health in July 2020, the number of hospitalized patients peaked at 831.

Other ***COVID*** metrics are getting closer to where they were last August: Miami-Dade reported a weekly average of 14% positivity rates for ***COVID*** tests performed across the county, compared to 18% last year. Miami-Dade's Fire Rescue Department is responding to an average of 106 suspected ***COVID*** calls a day. A year ago, it was 125.

Deaths from ***COVID***, however, are down dramatically from last summer, when as many as 33 were reported in a single day in Miami-Dade. Now, with 84% of the vulnerable 65-and-older population vaccinated, the most Miami-Dade deaths reported from ***COVID*** over the last two weeks was six.

As August began last year, a summer ***COVID***-19 spike resulted in closed restaurant dining rooms and a 10 p.m. ***curfew*** on top of mandatory ***mask*** requirements across the county.

Those kinds of local emergency orders on businesses and individual behavior were curtailed by Gov. Ron DeSantis last fall, then restricted by state law earlier this year.

When she signed the reporting order for hospitals last week, Levine Cava reimposed ***mask*** rules for county-owned buildings but only requested that businesses follow suit with their own ***mask*** requirements.

In a statement Monday, Levine Cava warned the public that this ***COVID*** spike looks as alarming as the one that hit in 2020.

"Miami-Dade -- the ***COVID*** situation is becoming as dire as it was this time last year," she said in a Twitter post. "Hospitalizations are climbing at a dangerous rate and our positivity rate is now over 12%. But there's a key difference from last year: We have the ***vaccine***. Let's use it."

**Load-Date:** August 3, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Record breaking COVID stats, mask wars and rhetoric to discredit CDC*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:638R-GM21-JC3J-X2PG-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

August 2, 2021 Monday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** politics\_policy\_in\_sunshine\_state

**Length:** 2301 words

**Byline:**  Mary Ellen Klas

Newsletters |

**Body**

It's Monday, Aug. 2 and Florida has earned more gold medals in the Tokyo Olympics than any other state. But our other success story -- when we supposedly crushed ***COVID*** as we kept the state open for business -- has been brutally tarnished as the pandemic has roared back to life with frightening ferocity.

On Saturday, the state reported more new ***COVID***-19 cases to the Centers for Disease Control than any previous day in the coronavirus pandemic: 21,683. On Sunday, the state broke another record with more people hospitalized than the previous record on July 23, 2020.

WHAT WE'RE TALKING ABOUT

Fear and frustration is mounting: Miami-Dade Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** mandated masks indoors at all county facilities and urged private employers to do the same. The Key Biscayne mayor on Sunday announced that a ***mask*** mandate will go into place at all village facilities, both officials defying a state law that allows the governor or Legislature to invalidate local ***mask*** mandates and curfews.

Companies mandating masks: As the governor and state legislature discourage ***mask*** mandates, several companies are taking the opposite tack. Publix announced it is again requiring all employees -- regardless of vaccination status -- to wear face coverings while inside any of its 1,273 stores. Several Miami restaurants are requiring employees to be vaccinated. And Florida's mega tourist meccas -- Universal Orlando, Disney World and Kennedy Space Center -- started requiring guests to wear face masks indoors again.

Right to infect: Gov. Ron DeSantis' reflexive reaction has been consistent: use government to protect the rights of people to infect others, but not the rights of Floridians to be protected from infection.

MIA\_05LASTDAYOFSCHOOL\_CPJSuperintendent Alberto Carvalho, center, bids iPrep Academy pre-k students a wonderful summer as Aillette Rodriguez-Diaz, assistant principal grades Pk-5, gives out hugs to departing students at the end of the school year. iPrep Academy elementary students ended the tumultuous ***COVID***-19 pandemic school year with hugs and goodbyes and a press conference by Superintendent Alberto Carvalho recapping all the challenges of the past school year on Wednesday, June 9, 2021, the last day of school for Miami-Dade students.

After the school districts of Broward and Gadsden counties announced they would require kids to wear masks in the fall to prevent them from getting infected with the delta variant at school, the governor signed an executive order Friday prohibiting school districts from imposing ***mask*** mandates and leaving it up to parents' to choose. The order also gave the power to Education Secretary Richard Corcoran to withhold state funds if school districts disobeyed the order.

"We're in a situation where we need to make sure the parents' rights are protected," the governor said. But questions immediately arose about whether the governor had the authority to impose the rule.

Miami-Dade mayor: ***COVID*** spike means time for vaccinated to wear masks indoors againMiami-Dade County Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** holds a press conference outside Government Center to announce county measures to address the recent surge of ***COVID***-19 cases and hospitalizations, and to urge the community to get vaccinated.

Is executive order legal? The governor lifted the state of emergency in June, leaving the constitutional authority to local school boards to "operate, control and supervise all free public schools within the school district." The governor contends his legal authority rests in the newly-enacted "parents bill of rights" law. But Ron Meyer, one of Florida's leading education policy attorneys, argues that the constitution mandates that local school districts keep students safe, and he questions the governor's authority to ban ***mask*** mandates.

Meyer argues that the governor is also engaged in situational enforcement of the law. The state bans indoor smoking, for example, because of the effects secondhand smoke on others and the governor isn't blocking enforcement of that. "How is this any different?" Meyer asked.

MIA\_103FIUCorona08NEWPPPFIU staff members Javier Marquez (second from left), vice president and chief of staff, and Bridget Pelaez (center), FIU assistant director, emergency, load a set of ventilators that Florida International University is lending to the state to treat patients affected by the ***COVID***-19 outbreak, on Wednesday, April 8, 2020.

Stop for a moment and read this paragraph: "The youngest patient, a 27-year-old woman on a ventilator, had to be resuscitated with a bag valve ***mask*** after her blood oxygen saturation levels crashed. The oldest, a 71-year-old man, has been in the ICU for two weeks. He has been in a coma for three days. When he awakens, if he awakens, he will be a widower. The man's wife, also hospitalized with ***COVID***-19, died two days earlier."

That account is from Dan Chang's haunting report on a ***COVID***-only intensive care unit at Jackson Memorial Hospital in Miami where all beds are filled with patients who have not been vaccinated and hospital staff are scrambling to create more space for the rush of patients they know are still coming. Nearly all the patients are under age 50.

Meanwhile, members of the governor's staff, whose salaries are paid by taxpayers, continued their social media stream of defensive statements, nit-picking of numbers, and little talk of prevention.

Misfire: DeSantis' press secretary Christina Pushaw attempted to correct Agriculture Commissioner Nikki Fried, who has been conducting "daily briefings" to reinforce Florida's ***COVID***-19 case counts: "Her assertion 'it's worse than the worst last year' is factually incorrect but Florida media activists will ignore that. Narrative > numbers,'' Pushaw wrote on Twitter. Fried, a Democrat, is challenging DeSantis, a Republican, for governor.

But Pushaw's timing was off. The U.S. Department of Health & Human Services on Sunday released the latest data showing that in fact the number of people hospitalized with ***COVID***-19 in Florida had exceeded the previous high of July 2020 and a record 10,207 people in Florida were hospitalized with confirmed ***COVID***-19 cases.

Justifying surge as 'seasonal': Kyle Lamb, an analyst in DeSantis' office of planning and budgeting, echoed the governor's claim that the surge was predicable because it's "seasonal." "Yep he has been absolutely steadfast in his position that the virus is seasonal and Florida should anticipate a summer bump in prevalence. That's been maintained over and over and over,'' he wrote on Twitter.

What's not said: There are exceptions, but most of the chatter from the governor's acolytes is bereft of empathy or concern for people trapped by others who chose not to shield themselves against the virus. And what they and the governor don't say is that, unlike last year, this year's "seasonal" spike is being fueled by the delta variant, which replicates faster than the original virus, is now infecting a startling number of younger patients, (many of whom need intensive care and nearly all of whom are not vaccinated,) may lead to more severe illness, and is as contagious as chicken pox.

To the doctors and nurses on the front line, the surge in ***COVID***-19 cases after months of promoting a ***vaccine*** is more than a "bump." The data shows that this summer, patients are younger, healthier and sicker. From Jacksonville to Sarasota to Tallahassee, home of the state capital, the numbers are alarming. Tallahassee Memorial HealthCare on Sunday reported more than 70 patients in its ***COVID***-19 unit - the highest ever.

1 million unvaccinated elders: The next response from the governor and his staff was: "We have protected the vulnerable by vaccinating the older population." But according to Jason Salemi, an epidemiologist with the University of South Florida in Tampa, there are nearly 8 million Floridians who are eligible for the ***vaccine*** but have not taken it and almost 1 million of them are people 65 and older.

IMG\_MIA\_SOS\_CUBA\_DAV3\_6\_1\_4GKSBNCK\_L670271300.JPGGovernor Ron DeSantis address the media during a round table discussion with South Florida Officials and Cuban representatives at American Museum of the Cuban Diaspora in Miami, Florida, on Tuesday, July 13, 2021.

Undermining CDC: On Sunday, the governor was tweeting about his record of vaccinating seniors. On Wednesday, he was discrediting the institution that authorizes and oversees the ***vaccine***. "Did you not get the CDC's memo?" DeSantis joked before an almost entirely unmasked audience of activists and lawmakers at the GOP-dominated American Legislative Exchange Council meeting in Salt Lake City. "I don't see you guys complying."

He called the CDC's new guidelines to wear masks indoors in communities with high ***COVID*** rates "a Faucian dystopia" and continued: "The CDC is corrupt and wants to enslave us all but also go get the ***vaccine***. They say it's really safe and effective.''

Here's the problem: These are very different perceptions, so which of these arguments does DeSantis want people to believe?

Closed door meeting: Earlier in the week, DeSantis held a closed-door meeting with a collection of scientists who agree with him that masks should not be required in schools. The meeting was remarkable in that it was closed to the public and media and only afterward was a recording made available on Rumble, an alternative social media site that the governor has given exclusive access to in the past.

-iSwJZZ1\_400x40\_fitted.jpegThis is Christina Pushaw's profile photo from her Twitter account, which she uses to advocate for Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis.

So who's advising the governor with this odd media messaging? We know his wife is his chief advisor and he primarily relies on his own counsel, but he has hired some new staff. Christina Pushaw became DeSantis' press secretary in May and, since that time has used the job to become one of the loudest pro-DeSantis voices on social media.

WHAT WE'RE WATCHING

New sanctions against Cuba: In a move that came ahead of a White House meeting between President Joe Biden and Cuban American activists, the U.S. on Friday issued sanctions against the Cuban National Revolutionary Police and its two top officials for their role in the violent crackdown of anti-government protesters in Cuba. The Department of the Treasury used the Global Magnitsky act to blacklist the police agency. Biden said more sanctions were coming unless "drastic changes" took place in Cuba and said his administration was pursuing "every available option to provide internet access and help the Cubans bypass the censorship that is being imposed" by Cuban authorities.

Overturning Roe v. Wade: DeSantis last week joined with 10 other Republican governors to sign onto a brief urging the U.S. Supreme Court to overturn two of the most important abortion cases in U.S. history. The brief urges the court to reconsider past decisions on the 1973 case Roe v. Wade and the 1992 case Planned Parenthood of Southeast Pennsylvania v. Casey. Roe established the constitutional right to an abortion nationally, and Casey reaffirmed that right while making it easier for states to legally pass some abortion regulations.

IMG\_0201191717.JPG\_2\_1\_7E7693NTClaudy Gassant, a former investigative judge in Haiti charged with finding out who killed Jean Leopold Dominique, a famous journalist and outspoken critic, is dead in the Dominican Republic.

More frightening Haiti developments: A former top government prosecutor, who was once forced to flee Haiti for Miami in fear for his life, is dead. Claudy Gassant was found dead Saturday in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic where he recently had been living. The discovery came on the same day Gassant was expected to be in South Florida for a conference on Haiti's widening insecurity. His death was described as suspicious.

How much does it cost to issue bonuses to cops and teachers? In Florida it's $3.6 million. Florida is paying a private contractor $3.6 million to help issue $1,000 bonus checks bearing the governor's logo to teachers, principals and first responders.

Two state agencies signed contracts with Fidelity Information Services in June to collect information on police officers, firefighters, paramedics, teachers and principals to determine which ones are eligible for the $1,000 bonuses and send them checks.

MIA\_Frank\_Artiles\_MJO\_8Frank Artiles leaves the Turner Guilford Knight Correctional Center in Miami, Florida on Thursday, March 18, 2021. Artiles posted $5,000 bail after facing charges relating to a 2020 Senate District 37 campaign.

Artiles had help: Documents released last week show that Frank Artiles didn't work alone in the clever scheme to coordinate and promote so-called "ghost" candidates in three state Senate races last year. The political committees that paid Artiles more than $125,000 were based out of the Tallahassee headquarters of Associated Industries of Florida, a big-business lobbying group. Artiles also worked with AIF's GOP pollster, Ryan Tyson.

Records released by prosecutors also show that Artiles helped another no-party candidate, 82-year-old Celso Alfonso, to qualify on the 2020 ballot. Alfonso was recruited by Artiles at a barber shop and ran in Senate District 39, won by Republican Sen. Ana Maria Rodriguez.

Stay well and we'd love to hear from you. Miami Herald Capitol Bureau Chief Mary Ellen Klas curates the Politics and Policy in the Sunshine State newsletter. If you have any ideas or suggestions, please drop me a note at [*meklas@miamiherald.com*](mailto:meklas@miamiherald.com)

Special offer: The Miami Herald needs your support if we are to continue to supply the meaningful local journalism you count on during these unprecedented times. We've lowered our monthly rate for unlimited digital access to $.99 a month. Check it out!

Know someone who'd like to get this newsletter? Send this to a friend to receive it weekly.

**Load-Date:** August 2, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*'It just went boom.' ICUs are being overwhelmed with younger -- and sicker -- patients*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:638J-6B81-JC3J-X1FS-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

August 1, 2021 Sunday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** coronavirus

**Length:** 3902 words

**Byline:**  Daniel Chang

Miami Herald

**Body**

Inside a ***COVID***-only intensive care unit at Jackson Memorial Hospital in Miami, all eight beds are filled with patients.

Six of the eight patients are younger than 50 years old. None of them are vaccinated against ***COVID***-19.

The youngest patient, a 27-year-old woman on a ventilator, had to be resuscitated with a bag valve ***mask*** after her blood oxygen saturation levels crashed. The oldest, a 71-year-old man, has been in the ICU for two weeks. He has been in a coma for three days. When he awakens, if he awakens, he will be a widower. The man's wife, also hospitalized with ***COVID***-19, died two days earlier.

Many healthcare workers at Jackson Memorial thought the end of the pandemic was in sight, largely due to the effectiveness of the vaccines. Then the delta variant took hold, particularly in areas with low vaccination rates, and cases are surging again, only at a faster clip.

"It just went boom," said Ademola Ayo Akinkunmi, director of patient care services for Jackson Health.

Nurse managers and staff scrambled to create more space at Miami-Dade's public hospital for the sudden rush of new patients, but they have struggled with what feels like a Sisyphean task.

"No matter how hard we work to discharge patients," Akinkunmi said, "we know there are others coming."

During the past month, the ***COVID*** pandemic has roared back to life with astonishing speed and frightening virulence, crushing hopes for an end to the epidemic and presenting new challenges for public health officials.

New infections and hospital admissions are rising, driven by the highly contagious delta variant, relatively low vaccination coverage and the resumption of social activities.

Most hospitals are reluctant to mandate vaccines for workers. That may soon change.

At the same time, new evidence strongly suggests that even vaccinated individuals can catch and spread the virus -- confounding public health officials struggling to persuade more Americans to get inoculated.

In Florida, the number of new cases and the rate of positive tests for the virus that causes ***COVID***-19 -- a measure known as the level of community transmission -- is high in all 67 counties, according to Centers for Disease Control and Prevention data.

On Saturday, Florida reported 21,683 new ***COVID***-19 cases as of July 30, the single-highest daily ***COVID*** case count since the pandemic began 18 months ago, according to CDC data. The seven-day moving average soared to 15,817, a more than 750% increase since July 1.

MH\_Florida\_cases

The sudden and unexpected resurgence threatens the return to normalcy that many Americans have longed for after 18 months of the pandemic. Many felt they had done their part by getting vaccinated, but their resolve has turned to anger as they see that preventable disease and death is soaring, primarily among the roughly 50% of the nation that has not yet been vaccinated.

As cases surge, the daily count of total ***vaccine*** doses administered in the United States has plummeted from a seven-day rolling average high of 3.4 million in mid-April to fewer than 450,000 on July 29, according to CDC data.

"The vast majority of transmission, the vast majority of severe disease, hospitalization and death is almost exclusively happening among unvaccinated people," CDC Director Rochelle Walensky said this week during a press call to announce that the agency had reversed its earlier recommendation that vaccinated persons did not have to wear masks indoors or outside because they were protected.

Walensky said new evidence had emerged that some vaccinated people infected with the delta variant may be contagious and spread the virus to others. "This new science is worrisome," she said. But in announcing the update, Walensky did not provide evidence for the change.

The CDC's about-face was sharply criticized as inconsistent and confusing by leading Republicans, including Gov. Ron DeSantis. Efforts to enforce the new guidance in the U.S. House of Representatives triggered a standoff, with some members refusing to wear masks as had been ordered by the Capitol Hill physician.

On Friday, the CDC released a new report of the agency's investigation of an outbreak in Massachusetts during July. Investigators found that among 469 cases of ***COVID***-19 linked to summer events and large public gatherings in Barnstable County on Cape Cod, nearly three quarters or 346 cases occurred in fully vaccinated individuals.

MIA\_***COVID***\_RESURGE\_DAV12Twila Jones, 56, gets tested for ***COVID***-19 at a testing center at Cagni Park in North Miami, Florida, on Friday, July 30, 2021.

No deaths had been reported as of July 27, the CDC report said. But five people were hospitalized, including four who were fully vaccinated. One hospitalized patient between the ages of 50 and 59 was not vaccinated and had multiple underlying medical conditions. The four vaccinated patients ranged from 20 to 70, and two had underlying medical conditions.

The delta variant was the predominant strain in the outbreak, according to the report, which said that infection with delta led to similarly high viral loads in vaccinated and unvaccinated individuals.

South Florida hospitals see rise in young patients as ***COVID*** resurgence gains steam

"This finding is concerning and was a pivotal discovery leading to CDC's updated ***mask*** recommendations," Walensky said in a prepared statement on Friday. "The masking recommendation was updated to ensure the vaccinated public would not unknowingly transmit virus to others."

Delta remains the dominant variant circulating in the United States, making up more than 80% of the virus samples genetically sequenced in recent weeks.

'This is very different'

For doctors, nurses, technicians, therapists and other healthcare workers who have been caring for patients without a break since March 2020, the sudden surge has hurt morale, said Magdalena Nisr, a nurse manager for Jackson Health who works on the ***COVID***-19-positive patient floor.

"It's very depressing to see that as a community we're going back to the numbers that we had at the beginning of the pandemic," Nisr said.

Last summer, when Jackson Health was slammed with a surge of ***COVID***-positive patients, hospital administrators suspended non-essential surgeries in order to open more beds. Most of the patients were elderly, and many had underlying medical conditions that raised their risk for severe outcomes from the disease, said Alix Zacharski, a nurse and manager of the medical intensive care unit at Jackson Memorial.

This time around, patients are younger, healthier and sicker.

"Unlike last year, we're getting a very young population, which is extremely concerning because this time we're now getting young people without pre-existing conditions," Zacharski said. "So that's scarier."

On a recent weekday afternoon, Zacharski was working in the ICU when a 27-year-old patient's vital signs crashed, triggering an alarm on a computer monitor in the nurses' station. Her blood oxygen saturation levels had dropped suddenly from 95 to 64. Normal readings usually range from 95 to 100, and anything below 90 is considered low.

As the patient's heart rate accelerated, Zacharski and her colleagues rushed to the patient's room and removed the ventilator from her throat. Then they applied a bag valve ***mask***, pumping the air bag by hand to force oxygen into the patient's lungs.

The medical team revived the patient, and her blood oxygen levels slowly recovered. It's possible that the patient's blood oxygen levels crashed because of a mucus plug, Zacharski said, emphasizing that dangerous complications can arise at any time.

MIA\_JACKSONCOVIDWARD-Local1 Nurse Alix Zacharski, right, sanitizes her hands as other doctors and nurses care for patients in the Medical Intensive Care Unit for ***COVID***-19 patients at Jackson Memorial Hospital on July 23. Jackson is seeing ***COVID*** patients who are younger, healthier and sicker, which Zacharski said, is "scarier."

Patients coming in much sicker

Many of the ***COVID***-positive patients admitted in recent weeks appear to Zacharski to be more severely ill than those she saw last year.

"People come down with it within five days and they're really sick," she said. "They are coming to the hospital saying, 'I don't feel good. I can't breathe'. That's when you're feeling, 'Oh, this is very different from what it was before.' "

By the time a patient gets to the ICU, Zacharski said there's not much more that nurses can do other than to help relieve the patient's anxiety and get them to focus intensely on something most people do without thinking: breathe.

Doctors and nurses try mightily to avoid having to put a patient on a ventilator, she said, and every failure carries a heavy emotional burden.

"It's very hard for us when someone's eyes are looking at you, staring at you, deadlocked, pleading and begging you, hugging you to help them breathe," Zacharski said. "That's the part that stays with us. It's really hard."

MIA\_JACKSONCOVIDWARD-Local0 (13)A nurse walks by the medical intensive care ***COVID*** unit at Jackson Memorial Hospital on July 23, 2021. ***COVID*** cases are surging in Florida and hospitalizations are rising, though the vast majority of patient admissions at Jackson and other area hospitals are unvaccinated younger people.

Pandemic of the unvaccinated

The highest spread of new infections and severe illness is happening in places with low vaccination rates and among unvaccinated people.

Florida's vaccination rate tracks closely with the nation's coverage.

About 50% or 164.2 million Americans were fully vaccinated as of July 30, according to CDC data. In Florida, around half the eligible population 12 and older had not been fully vaccinated as of July 29, according to the state health department's weekly ***COVID***-19 status report, which counts 10 million fully vaccinated Floridians, or about 52.5% of an estimated 19.1 million eligible residents.

Miami-Dade has a relatively high vaccination rate -- 85 percent of ***vaccine***-eligible residents have received at least one dose and 70 percent were fully vaccinated as of July 29, according to the CDC.

Vaccination Box (3)

Still, there are nearly 8 million Floridians who are eligible for the ***vaccine*** but have not taken it, said Jason Salemi, an epidemiologist with the University of South Florida in Tampa.

"Almost 1 million of those are people 65 and older," he said.

Daily infections continue to increase across the country, with the seven-day rolling average now up to 67,080 new cases per day, nearly five times the most recent low on June 19, when there were 11,473 cases, according to the CDC. Florida infections were up to 15,817 cases per day, as per the seven-day rolling average the state reported to the CDC on Saturday-- accounting for more than 1 in 5 of all cases reported in the United States.

Deaths from ***COVID***-19 also have begun to rise nationally, with the seven-day rolling average up to 275 deaths per day, which is more than 60% higher than the most recent low of 170 deaths the CDC reported for July 10. Florida deaths have ticked up, too -- rising to a seven-day rolling average of 43 per day on July 29 or more than 70% higher than the 25 deaths reported for July 10.

With rising infections come more ***COVID***-19-related hospitalizations. Some of the fastest increases have occurred in parts of the country with low vaccination rates, including Florida, Nevada, Arkansas and Missouri.

In response, some Florida hospitals have suspended visitations and others have taken the more drastic step of restricting elective surgeries while administrators scramble to find space for intensive care patients and to shore up nursing and staffing shortages.

Brevard County's Health First, which operates four hospitals, paused all elective surgeries not considered "essential" through Aug. 15 while Jacksonville's Baptist Health asked surgeons to delay some elective surgeries at its six hospitals because of the rise in ***COVID***-19 patients.

Orange County Mayor Jerry Demings this week announced that local hospitals are in crisis from the surge -- one week after Miami-Dade Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** issued a similar warning about rising hospital admissions, particularly among the unvaccinated, and urged everyone to get the ***vaccine*** to protect themselves and others.

On Wednesday, with cases and hospitalizations continuing to rise in Miami-Dade, Levine Cava mandated masks at all county facilities and urged businesses to require them indoors, too.

Younger patients

Though hospital admissions continue to rise in Florida and elsewhere, they remain well below the peaks of spring and summer 2020. But there are notable differences between the patients admitted in recent weeks and those hospitalized during the waves last year.

Patients older than 80 are no longer the majority, as they were in 2020. Many more are middle aged and younger, reflecting a national trend. About 73% of patients hospitalized for ***COVID***-19 were under the age of 65, according to CDC data as of the week ending July 24.

Dr. Marc Napp, chief medical officer for Memorial Healthcare System, the public hospital for South Broward, said patients are likely younger this time around because health officials emphasized the importance of vaccinating the elderly early on.

"It's a good prediction that had we been more effective in getting the entire population vaccinated over the last six months, that we wouldn't be where we are," he said.

Memorial Health is now proceeding as though this July will be a repeat of last year, when ***COVID***-19-related admissions peaked at 674 patients across the system's six hospitals. The hospital system reported 420 patients with ***COVID***-19 on Friday, including 55 who were in intensive care units. Only one person was vaccinated in the ICU, and 96% of the 420 were unvaccinated.

IMG\_MIA\_Memorial\_Presser\_5\_1\_UNKVE7JD\_L671006086 Juana Mejia, the ***COVID*** ICU nurse manager at Memorial Hospital Miramar, said Friday the hospital is seeing patients in their 30s, 40s and 50s with ***COVID***.

Administrators are hiring extra staff to handle increased patients, dialing back in-person meetings and reinforcing masking and social distancing.

"Any surge starts the way this surge is starting," Napp said. "There's no way to know how long it will last or how high it will go. ... We are already preparing for being back where we were last summer."

New mandates

Higher vaccination rates could have averted the current crisis, Walensky said when announcing the new CDC guidance, which calls for all Americans, vaccinated or not, to wear masks indoors in areas with high levels of community transmission. The CDC also recommends that everyone in K-12 schools wear masks indoors, including students, teachers, staff and visitors.

Walensky acknowledged the disappointment and fatigue that many may feel at having to take a step back at this stage in the pandemic, when there's a ***vaccine*** that could help to end it but many have chosen not to take it. She said it was a difficult decision to reverse course.

People are tired, frustrated and many are facing mental health challenges, she said. But the continued pace of deaths, illness and hospital admissions for what is now a preventable disease demanded a change.

"It is not a welcome piece of news that masking is going to be part of people's lives who have already been vaccinated," Walensky said. "This new guidance weighs heavily on me."

But growing frustration and anger has helped drive support for ***vaccine*** mandates.

On Thursday, President Joe Biden announced a requirement that all federal employees be vaccinated or face repeated tests and other restrictions. Biden, seeking to revive the nation's stalled vaccination drive, also called on states to offer a $100 reward to individuals who get fully vaccinated.

The Department of Veterans Affairs became the first federal agency to mandate vaccination for employees while California and New York City announced requirements for their public workers to get vaccinated or submit to weekly tests.

The president's announcement followed public calls this week by the American Medical Association, the American Hospital Association and other medical professional groups that all healthcare workers be vaccinated. Some Florida medical centers, including Holy Cross Health in Fort Lauderdale and the Mayo Clinic in Jacksonville, already require employees to be vaccinated.

At Jackson Health System, where about 60% of its 13,000-person workforce is vaccinated, CEO Carlos Migoya said he is considering a ***vaccine*** mandate. He acknowledged that the coverage rate for Jackson Health employees is "low" and said administrators were working to boost take-up of the shots and to dispel rumors and misinformation about the ***vaccine***.

"Jackson employees are no different than every person out in the street," he said.

Screen Shot 2021-07-20 at 2.35.55 PM.pngJackson Health CEO Carlos Migoya in a screenshot at a video conference call with media on July 20, 2021. Jackson announced its new restricted visitation policy and stressed the need for the public to get vaccinated for ***COVID***-19.

'Getting sick very fast'

A big difference this summer is the delta variant, which appears to replicate much faster, with the virus becoming detectable four days after exposure compared with an average of six days in people with the original strain, said Dr. Lilian Abbo, an infectious disease specialist at Jackson Health.

"The people getting sick coming in now are getting sick very fast," Abbo said. "We were not seeing that before."

Abbo said vaccinated individuals also are testing positive and some develop symptoms, but that the vast majority are still protected from severe illness and even death from ***COVID***-19.

"Vaccines work," she said.

Napp, the chief medical officer for Memorial Health, said the ***vaccine*** is key to long-term control of the virus that causes ***COVID***-19.

No matter which strain predominates, it is likely to become one of the thousands of viruses that circulate regularly, some of which can cause severe illness, such as the flu, and some that don't, such as the common cold.

Once a person has been exposed to the virus, it's possible that they will become infected again but the illness may not be as severe as the initial bout.

But for now, the virus has infected only a fraction of the population -- meaning there's a lot of wood left to burn. And first-time cases tend to be the most severe.

"Any virus that appears on the scene as this one has will be here forever," Napp said. "It's not going away. It's going to be in the general circulation of viral pathogens."

MIA\_***COVID***\_Test\_Lines\_MJO\_5Cars line up at Tropical Park's ***COVID***-19 testing site in Miami, Florida, on Friday, July 30, 2021.

At Baptist Health South Florida, doctors expected an uptick in cases after the Fourth of July holiday. But the delta variant accelerated the rise to worrisome levels. ***COVID***-19-related admissions have soared at Baptist Health -- with 616 patients hospitalized across the nonprofit system's 11 hospitals in Monroe, Miami-Dade and Palm Beach counties as of Friday.

Friday's census of patients with ***COVID***-19 at Baptist Health hospitals was a 58% increase over the prior week, and a 159% spike over two weeks ago.

Dr. Sergio Segarra said the high level of community transmission in South Florida is not just a statistic. It drives many more patients to the hospital and strikes people in all walks of life.

"The virus is rampant in the community and we're seeing it in families. We're admitting a husband and wife, a husband, wife and child," he said. "All those things are happening."

"We don't have those elderly patients. It's a younger population. So we're often able to treat them as outpatients," Segarra added. "But those that get admitted and get hospitalized are obviously a lot sicker. So even though they're younger, they're a lot sicker and unfortunately they can succumb to ***COVID*** as well."

At Jackson Health's three facilities in North Miami Beach, Miami and South Miami-Dade, ***COVID***-positive patients are also rising and trending younger.

As of Friday, Jackson Health reported 232 patients admitted with ***COVID***-19 -- nearly four times as many as the 59 people hospitalized with the disease on July 1, but less than half the number of patients Miami-Dade's public hospital saw at the pandemic's peak on July 26, 2020, when there were 487 patients.

Nine out of 10 patients admitted with ***COVID***-19 in recent weeks were not vaccinated.

He declined the ***vaccine***

While the most severely ill patients at Jackson Health go to the ICU, there are more patients with milder symptoms from ***COVID***-19 in the medical surgical wing.

That's where Hialeah resident Victor Suero was recovering from ***COVID***-19 on a recent weekday, in a section of the hospital called South Wing Seven.

MIA\_JACKSONCOVIDWARD-Local0 (2) Victor Suero, 34, chose not to get vaccinated for ***COVID*** and is in a ***COVID*** wing at Jackson Memorial Hospital in Miami. ***COVID*** cases are surging in Florida and hospitalizations are rising, with the vast majority of patient admissions at Jackson and other area hospitals unvaccinated younger people.

Suero, 34, was admitted to Jackson Memorial on July 21 with a 102.5-degree fever and complaining of fatigue. Suero said he had chosen not to take the ***vaccine***.

"I've had every opportunity to get vaccinated," he said.

Suero, who works as a utility lineman, chalked up his hesitance to get vaccinated as, "just a personal preference."

Then he said he had not taken the ***vaccine*** because he just moved back to Miami from Lancaster, Pennsylvania, where transmission of the virus was lower. Suero said he was also concerned that the ***vaccine*** might have an adverse reaction with medication he is taking to heal an infection in his left leg, which is still recovering from an open fracture that he suffered in a motorcycle accident in October.

Suero said he was not wearing a helmet at the time of his motorcycle accident, and that he considers himself "very lucky" to have avoided a serious head injury.

He said his mother and sister, who are vaccinated, have been urging him to take the ***vaccine***, but he hadn't listened. Suero said he doesn't fall for disinformation, and acknowledged that perhaps his political preferences and a feeling of youthful invincibility may have something to do with it.

"It's not from a lack of having it from both sides because I'm conservative, but at the same time my mom and my sister are both fully vaccinated. So they're always bugging me about it, too," he said. "Obviously, I don't believe that if I get the vaccination I'm going to grow a third leg. It's just that I'm a healthy male. I don't really have any problems. Even for what I just went through, for me, it just felt like a really bad cold just with a fever. I know there are people who have it a lot worse than I do. But it was just a calculated risk on my behalf that I felt I would rather live with the consequences of being without it."

Suero said he is reconsidering that decision now, in part because he fears what ***COVID***-19 might do to his healing leg, which requires more surgery to repair the fractures.

"I don't want any complications with that. So that's going to be more of the driving factor," he said. "Because if they're going to tell me something like, 'Okay, well ***COVID*** is going to mess up my chances of saving my leg,' then yeah, that's going to be a simple answer to go get the vaccination."

Miami Herald staff writer Sarah Blaskey, el Nuevo Herald staff writer Ana Claudia Chacin and Miami Herald newsroom developer Albert Franquiz contributed to this report.

**Load-Date:** April 16, 2022

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Publix requiring its employees to mask up again as Florida faces another COVID surge*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6388-WS31-DYJM-M1RH-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

July 30, 2021 Friday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** coronavirus

**Length:** 373 words

**Byline:**  Howard Cohen

Miami Herald

**Body**

Vaccinated Publix employees had about two months to show customers their smiles.

That's ending Monday as the Lakeland-based supermarket chain again requires all employees -- regardless of vaccination status -- to wear face coverings while inside any of Publix's 1,273 stores in Florida, Georgia, Alabama, Tennessee and the Carolinas.

"We encourage all to do their part to slow the spread of ***COVID***-19," spokeswoman Maria Brous said, reflecting Publix's statement.

The chain is not requiring its associates to be vaccinated, but encourages them to get one, she said.

Brous cited the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's updated guidance that recommends that people in "areas of substantial or high transmission risk" wear face coverings over their noses and mouths when in public and indoor spaces.

Florida is an "area of substantial or high transmission risk." On Thursday, Florida recorded its fourth highest ever single-day spike in ***COVID***-19 cases since the pandemic began in March 2020. Florida represents about 6.5% of the U.S. population but is accounting for about 20.4% of the country's new cases, based on the data the state is reporting to the CDC.

Earlier this week, Miami-Dade Mayor ***Daniella Levine-Cava*** announced new ***mask*** rules for the county's government buildings and urged businesses to also require masks indoors.

On Thursday, Miami-Dade's "New ***Mask*** Guidance" posts on social media made no distinction between indoor and outdoor masking -- but prioritizes covering up when around large crowds.

Publix is offering vaccinations for the novel coronavirus at its pharmacies and you can walk up. You don't have to make an appointment anymore.

In May, when the CDC suggested that fully vaccinated people could remove masks, Publix followed suit. But as the delta variant surged, Publix moved to require masks as August begins.

Publix did not say whether it would require customers to wear face coverings.

Miami-Dade mayor: ***COVID*** spike means time for vaccinated to wear masks indoors againMiami-Dade County Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** holds a press conference outside Government Center to announce county measures to address the recent surge of ***COVID***-19 cases and hospitalizations, and to urge the community to get vaccinated.

**Load-Date:** August 2, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Miami-Dade schools chief to follow science on masks. Too bad DeSantis won't do the same | Editorial*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6388-WS31-DYJM-M1RG-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

July 30, 2021 Friday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** editorials

**Length:** 1011 words

**Byline:**  the Miami Herald Editorial Board

Miami Herald

**Body**

Miami-Dade County Public Schools Superintendent Alberto Carvalho vowed to be guided by "science, by medical experts and public health experts" before deciding on a ***mask*** mandate for the next school year.

Good. That's what you'd expect from the leader of Florida's largest school district in a county with high transmission rates in a state where ***COVID***-19 cases and hospitalizations reached record numbers over the past week.

However, Gov. DeSantis is forcing Carvalho and other school-district leaders to make these decisions based on the governor's interpretation of public health, which means we're all in trouble.

Friday, DeSantis signed an executive order that essentially bans school ***mask*** mandates, prohibiting districts from violating "parents' right . . . to make health decisions for their minor children."

School boards that dare to cross the governor can lose state funding. In other words, the governor is willing to knee-cap school districts in order to make his constituents deathly ill.

Just hours before DeSantis' announcement, Carvalho told the Herald Editorial Board he would consult with the district's medical task force, which will meet before school starts on Aug. 23. He will also look at what the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the American Academy of Pediatrics have recommended. Carvalho previously had said masks would be optional, but that was in late June, before Florida became the pandemic's epicenter thanks to the highly transmissible delta variant.

An internal CDC document obtained by the Washington Post, based on still-unpublished data, states delta might lead to more serious illness and that it's as contagious as chickenpox and more contagious than the Ebola virus or common colds. That prompted the federal agency to advise fully vaccinated people to go back to wearing masks indoors.

Universal masking

The CDC and the Academy of Pediatrics also reached a consensus: Schools should be open, and universal masking is recommended for children older than 2 "because a significant portion of the student population [under the age of 12] is not yet eligible for vaccines, and masking is proven to reduce transmission of the virus and to protect those who are not vaccinated," the Academy of Pediatrics wrote in a July 9 advisory.

Carvalho said it's "probably a fairly accurate prediction" that the task force would end up recommending a ***mask*** mandate. Among the experts advising Carvalho is U.S. Surgeon General Vivek Murthy, a Miami Palmetto Senior High graduate.

"We have been a district that's well informed by science, by medical experts and public health experts and that will not change under my leadership," Carvalho told the Editorial Board. "The CDC has opined, the American Academy of Pediatrics has opined and the [Florida Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics] has opined as well. And, you know, they all agree in terms of protected and preventive measures."

If only school districts could base their decisions on the needs of their communities, by looking at infection rates in their back yards instead of being forced to follow an irresponsible blanket state policy that applies anywhere from rural to urban counties.

"I've been very clear I believe that generalized pronouncements via executive order, or state statute, that basically don't differentiate between conditions -- which may vary significantly from South Florida, Central Florida, the Panhandle -- that don't take into account how different those conditions may be and the impacts they may have, may not necessarily be in the best interest of our communities," Carvalho said.

DeSantis' order is nothing more than a governor throwing a tantrum after the Broward County School Board approved a ***mask*** mandate last week. The tantrum worked: the School Board now says it will comply with his order and is considering mandating masks only for employees, parents and visitors.

It's now up to districts to figure out how to please a governor who's not afraid to use his executive powers to punish communities while protecting the health of students and staff.

"In light of the release of the Executive Order, we certainly hope to be able to craft protocols that ensure full funding of our children's education, while simultaneously protecting their and their teachers' health and well-being," Carvalho said in a statement released Saturday.

Miami-Dade mayor: ***COVID*** spike means time for vaccinated to wear masks indoors againMiami-Dade County Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** holds a press conference outside Government Center to announce county measures to address the recent surge of ***COVID***-19 cases and hospitalizations, and to urge the community to get vaccinated.

Parents' rights

Local control makes sense, right? Well, not in Florida.

DeSantis' reaction to the pandemic has gone from vowing to protect the economy against shutdowns to making a mockery of a virus that's killing Floridians (38,900 and counting). At least he says vaccines are effective, which is way more than what some Republicans will dare to profess.

At a recent speaking engagement in Utah, DeSantis made fun of ***mask*** wearing. He opened up his speech at the American Legislative Exchange Council by looking at a mostly unmasked crowd and saying:

"Did you not get the CDC's memo?" our governor asked. "I don't see you complying," Politico reported.

His Friday announcement happened at a Cape Coral restaurant where -- surprise!-- most people were not wearing masks, the Sun Sentinel reported. That's typical fashion for a governor who sells campaign drink koozies and T-shirts emblazoned with "How the hell am I going to be able to drink a beer with a ***mask*** on?"

DeSantis doesn't have to like masks and he can tour the country all he wants mocking them.

But playing off parents' rights against the right of Floridians to live in good health will likely hurt the very people whom he's working hard to accommodate -- to say nothing of the rest of us.

Editor's note: This editorial has been updated to add a statement from Superintendent Alberto Carvalho about Gov. Ron DeSantis' executive order.

**Load-Date:** August 3, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Miami-Dade's mask request goes beyond CDC: wear them in public, including outdoors*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6382-85V1-DYJM-M3NW-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

July 29, 2021 Thursday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** miami\_dade

**Length:** 499 words

**Byline:**  Douglas Hanks

Miami Herald

**Body**

When she announced new ***mask*** rules in Miami-Dade County's government buildings, Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** urged businesses to follow suit and require masks indoors.

That mirrors new guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, which this week advised fully vaccinated people to wear masks indoors in areas like Miami where ***COVID***-19 is spreading quickly. But Levine Cava also wants Miami-Dade residents to wear masks when they're with other people outdoors -- advice that goes beyond CDC guidance.

Following up on a Wednesday press conference, Levine Cava's office on Thursday posted "New ***Mask*** Guidance" on social media that makes no distinction between indoor and outdoor masking, but does prioritize wearing a ***mask*** in large crowds.

"We strongly recommend everyone wear a ***mask*** in all public settings including outdoors -- especially when in large crowds and around people you don't know to be vaccinated," the guidance says.

The CDC website doesn't recommend masks for most vaccinated people: "Current data suggest the risk of transmission of SARS-CoV-2 in outdoor settings is minimal. In general, fully vaccinated people do not need to wear a ***mask*** outdoors. Fully vaccinated people might choose to wear a ***mask*** in crowded outdoor settings if they or someone in their household is immunocompromised."

Dr. Peter Paige, the Jackson Health System administrator who also serves as Levine Cava's top medical adviser, said the more aggressive masking guidance came from him. He said it makes sense for Miami-Dade to encourage ***mask***-wearing in public without focusing on location.

"We're just trying to encourage people to be more aware of their surroundings, and ***mask*** whenever they can," Paige said. As for going beyond the CDC recommendations, Paige said the worsening ***COVID*** situation in Miami-Dade calls for the more aggressive ***mask*** guidance.

"We're trying to stay as close to the forefront as we can," he said. "We're taking a more conservative approach because we're seeing the virus spread. We're seeing large crowds gather without masks on."

The CDC may already be considering more aggressive ***mask*** requirements. On Thursday, the Washington Post reported on an internal CDC presentation about the rapid spread of the delta variant of ***COVID***-19, and its ability to be passed on by vaccinated people as well as the unvaccinated. "Given the higher transmissibility and current ***vaccine*** coverage, universal masking is essential to reduce transmission of the Delta variant," the presentation states.

At Wednesday's press conference, Levine Cava announced masks would be required indoors at all county buildings. She also urged businesses to follow suit with their own ***mask*** rules, and encouraged the public to start wearing masks again regularly.

"Wear a ***mask*** in indoor settings, public indoor settings," she said. "We also strongly encourage people to wear masks in all public settings, even outdoors, especially when in large crowds and around people that you don't know have been vaccinated."

**Load-Date:** July 30, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Florida COVID update for Thursday: 17,589 new cases, 4th highest jump in pandemic history*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6384-WMG1-DYJM-M099-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

July 29, 2021 Thursday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** coronavirus

**Length:** 1041 words

**Byline:**  Devoun Cetoute

Miami Herald

**Body**

Florida recorded its fourth highest single-day spike in ***COVID***-19 cases since the pandemic began 16 months ago, reporting 17,589 new cases Wednesday to the federal government and deepening the state's exposure to the virulent delta variant.

This is the eighth consecutive day Florida has reported to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention more than 12,000 new daily ***COVID*** cases. On June 28 -- one month ago -- Florida reported only 1,312 new ***COVID*** cases, a 1,241 percent increase to the July 28 level of 17,589 cases, according to the CDC.

Florida, which represents about 6.5% of the U.S. population, is accounting for about 20.4% of the country's new cases, based on the data the state is reporting to the CDC. The state also reported 56 new deaths.

The high caseloads -- and the most severe cases -- are primarily due to unvaccinated individuals contracting the virus, public health experts say, calling it a "pandemic of the unvaccinated."

The state's three highest days of new ***COVID*** cases, preceding Wednesday's totals, all occurred during Florida's peak in January: 19,816 cases on Jan. 7; 19,530 cases on Jan. 8; and 17,783 cases recorded on Jan. 6, according to state data.

January was the worst month of the Florida pandemic, with daily case counts routinely topping 10,000. That followed a surge last July, when daily case counts also topped 10,000.

The latter half of July 2021 has been Florida's third ***COVID***-19 surge.

Florida's seven-day percent positivity rate climbed to 17.21% on Monday, up from 16.79% on Sunday, the state reported to the federal agency.

Cumulatively, Florida has recorded at least 2,551,923 confirmed ***COVID*** cases statewide and 38,896 deaths as of Wednesday, according to the CDC.

More than 12.2 million Floridians have received at least one dose of the ***vaccine***, or about 57.2% of the state's total population, according to the Florida's weekly ***COVID*** reports. About 49 percent of Florida's total population is fully vaccinated, in line with the U.S average.

Cases\_Jul29\_CDC

Counties, businesses revive ***COVID*** safety measures due to surge

After the CDC recommended all people, vaccinated or not, should be wearing masks indoors and in areas of high transmission, governments, schools and businesses have been reviving ***mask*** policies.

On Wednesday, Walt Disney World announced that starting Friday all guests -- vaccinated or not -- over the age of 2 will have to wear masks while indoors and on Disney transportation. Masks still won't be required outdoors, it said.

This came after Orange County Mayor Jerry Demings had reinstated a state of emergency in the county due to high rates of ***COVID***-19 transmission on the same day, the Orlando Sentinel reported.

Also on Wednesday: the Broward School Board voted unanimously to institute a ***mask*** mandate for all students, teachers and staff when school begins on Aug. 18.

In Miami-Dade County, Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** mandated masks at all county facilities on Wednesday, including libraries and recreational centers. She also urged businesses to require facial coverings indoors.

Mount Sinai Medical Center in Miami Beach is also reversing policies starting Friday, saying it will not allow visitors at its medical center or physician locations, while having limited visitation at its emergency centers in Miami Beach, Aventura and Hialeah.

Jackson Health System suspended visitations to most of its inpatient units in early July with exceptions for rehabilitation, pediatrics, the neonatal intensive care unit, maternity ward and non-***COVID*** end-of-life cases. Visitors are also not allowed in all adult emergency departments.

Miami-Dade County, Orange County and 64 other Florida counties are considered areas of high transmission by the CDC. The state has 67 counties.

Miami flash briefing player embed

***COVID***-19 vaccines in South Florida

The Miami Herald can no longer include new deaths by county because the state stopped classifying deaths by county in its report. The CDC does not display daily case totals for counties, only weekly averages.

In Miami-Dade County, 2,009,205, or 74% of the county's total population, have received at least one dose of the ***vaccine***, according to the CDC. Only 1,652,516 people are fully vaccinated, or 60.8% of the county's total population.

85.5% of the population 12 years old and over, 88.1% of people 18 and older, and 99.3% of people 65 and older have received at least one dose of the ***vaccine***.

The county's seven-day positivity rate was 12.74 percent from July 19-25.

In Broward County, 1,215,157 people have received at least one dose of the ***vaccine***, or 62.2% of the total population, according to the CDC. Only 1,002,929 people are fully vaccinated, or 51.4% of the county's total population.

72.2% of the population 12 years old and over, 74.5% of those 18 and older, and 94.8% of people 65 and older have received at least one dose of the ***vaccine***.

The county's seven-day percent positivity was 15.03% from July 19-25.

In Palm Beach County, 866,797 have received at least one dose of the ***vaccine***, or 57.9% of the total population, according to the CDC. Only 752,132 people are fully vaccinated, or 50.3% of the county's total population.

66.1% of people 12 years old and over, 68.4% of people 18 and older, and 88.6% of people 65 and older have received at least one dose of the ***vaccine***.

The county's seven-day percent positivity rate was 16.4% from July 19-25.

In Monroe County, 51,813 have received at least one dose of the ***vaccine***, or 69.8% of the total population, according to the CDC. Only 43,749 people are fully vaccinated, or 58.9% of the county's total population.

77.8% of people 12 years old and over, 80.5% of people 18 and older, and 99.9% of people 65 and older have received at least one dose of the ***vaccine***,

The county's seven-day percent positivity rate was 14.22% from July 19-25.

In Manatee County, 216,626 have received at least one dose of the ***vaccine***, or 53.7% of the total population, according to the CDC. Only 186,560 people are fully vaccinated, or 46.3% of the county's total population.

60.7% of people 12 years old and over, 63.4% of people 18 and older, and 86.7% of people 65 and older have received at least one dose of the ***vaccine***.

The county's seven-day percent positivity was 17.56% from July 19-25.

**Load-Date:** July 30, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Miami-Dade mayor: COVID spike means time for vaccinated to wear masks indoors again*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:637V-9141-JC3J-X0YF-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

July 28, 2021 Wednesday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** miami\_dade

**Length:** 1188 words

**Byline:**  Douglas Hanks

Miami Herald

**Body**

Faced with an alarming spike in ***COVID***-19 cases, Miami-Dade Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** on Wednesday mandated masks at all county facilities and urged businesses to require facial coverings indoors, too.

"The numbers are clear," Levine Cava said at a press conference outside the county's Stephen P. Clark Center in downtown Miami. "We hope that businesses will do the right thing."

While Levine Cava's predecessor, Carlos Gimenez, imposed detailed operational rules and restrictions for businesses during the 2020 ***COVID*** spikes, those executive powers were blocked last fall by Gov. Ron DeSantis and then by the Florida Legislature earlier this year. The new state law limits emergency orders to seven days without a vote by local city or county commission, and gives DeSantis veto power over orders deemed too restrictive of individual rights.

Levine Cava's reimposing ***mask*** rules at county buildings followed a string of similar steps across Florida after the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on Tuesday reversed prior guidance on facial coverings. In May, the agency said vaccinated people could safely go maskless indoors. Now the CDC says vaccinated people should wear masks indoors when they're in areas where ***COVID*** is spreading. Like most of Florida, the CDC lists Miami-Dade as having the highest level of community transmission of ***COVID***-19.

Levine Cava used her power as the county's top administrator to mandate masks at libraries, recreational centers, county-owned entertainment venues and offices, rules that apply to employees and visitors. Federal restrictions already require masks at transportation centers, including transit stations and airports.

The announcement reverses Levine Cava's May 13 directive that lifted ***mask*** rules in county facilities. That loosening followed the lead of the CDC, which declared then that vaccinated people could feel secure going about their days without wearing masks.

masksignjuly28.JPGFacilities workers reinstall ***mask*** signs at Miami-Dade County's Stephen P. Clark Center in downtown Miami on Wednesday, July 28, 2021, minutes after Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** ordered a return to masking rules at county facilities for the first time since May.

About one out of every 10 ***COVID***-19 tests are coming back positive in Miami-Dade, according to the latest statistics from the mayor's office, up from a positivity rate of less than 3% in the middle of June. Jackson Health System, the county's public hospital, reported 209 patients with ***COVID***-19 this week. That's more than triple what the hospital saw at the start of the month.

After Levine Cava's press conference, Miami-Dade's judicial system announced the revival of its ***mask*** mandate for all court buildings. Miami Beach said masks are now required in city buildings as well. In Miami, the county's largest city, administrators tightened the ***mask*** policy this week to focus on the unvaccinated segment of the 4,000-person workforce.

After urging employees to wear masks in May, now the city will require them -- unless employees show proof of vaccination or have a legal exemption.

"We have been operating on the honor system up to now, and we realized that we had very little compliance," City Manager Art Noriega said.

In Orange County, Mayor Jerry Demings went further, announcing new ***mask*** rules for government facilities as well as a requirement that all non-union county employees get vaccinated for ***COVID***-19 by the end of August.

The Levine Cava administration said it does not track vaccination status for a county payroll with more than 29,000 positions, but a spokesperson said a survey is coming. On Wednesday, Miami Beach revealed less than 30% of the city's workers had been vaccinated, according to a voluntary survey.

Other local leaders joined Levine Cava in urging Miami-Dade residents to get vaccinated for ***COVID***-19, and laid at least part of the current crisis at the feet of the unvaccinated.

"It's a little frustrating to be sitting here a year later," said Carlos Hernández, the mayor of Hialeah. "It is sad when I see the tourist buses stop in Hialeah to get the ***vaccine***, yet some ... for whatever reason -- religious beliefs, political beliefs, misinformation, whatever it is -- have chosen not to get vaccinated."

MIA\_07282021MayorDaniellaLevineCava0323Hialeah Mayor Carlos Hernández joins Miami-Dade County Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** during a press conference outside the Government Center to announce county measures to address the recent surge of ***COVID***-19 cases and hospitalizations, and urge the community to get vaccinated on Wednesday, July 28, 2021.

Miami-Dade has the highest vaccination rate in Florida, according to state statistics, with about 76% of residents 12 and over vaccinated with at least one dose. It still reported more than 11,000 new ***COVID*** cases last week, the highest in Florida.

Last year also saw a summer spike of ***COVID*** cases, with wider community spread since vaccines had not yet been developed. The national spike in ***COVID*** cases follows the spread of mutated versions of the virus, with the Delta variant now driving infections.

Vaccines reduce the risk of infection, and also drastically lower the chances of getting seriously ill from ***COVID***-19. Of the 209 Jackson patients with ***COVID***, the hospital said 89.5% are unvaccinated.

Jose "Pepe" Diaz, the county commission's chairman, announced earlier this month he contracted ***COVID*** after being fully vaccinated in the spring. "I just finished going through the Delta variant," he told reporters Wednesday. "If I hadn't gotten the shot and still got the variant, who knows what could have happened."

MIA\_07282021MayorDaniellaLevineCava0277Miami-Dade Commission Chairman Jose 'Pepe' Diaz joins Miami-Dade County Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** at a press conference outside the Government Center to announce county measures to address the recent surge of ***COVID***-19 cases and hospitalizations, and urge the community to get vaccinated on Wednesday, July 28, 2021.

While Florida law restricts emergency orders impacting business operations, Levine Cava said she was planning to revive an old order mandating daily hospital reports. That order was canceled May 28 as ***COVID*** cases were in retreat, ending a key metric for countywide spread. Miami-Dade relies on Florida's Health Department for ***COVID*** statistics on cases and positivity rate, but those are only released weekly.

Levine Cava said she's signed the new order requiring hospitals to resume daily reports on patients with ***COVID***, ***COVID*** admissions in critical-care wards, and the availability of ventilators.

At the Levine Cava press conference, speakers included a restaurant owner who recently resumed ***mask*** requirements at her Italian bistro. Macchialina owner Jacqueline Pirolo urged people to get vaccinated and start wearing masks inside again to reverse the current spread.

"Miami: Let's all come together and make this a priority," she said. "As an industry, we cannot afford another closure."

This article was updated to correct the ***COVID***-19 vaccination rate in Miami-Dade County.

Miami Herald staff writers Joey Flechas and Martin Vassolo contributed to this report.

**Load-Date:** July 29, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Planning on visiting Disney World? Surging COVID cases means you'll have to wear a mask*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:637V-YCN1-DYJM-M1SW-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

July 28, 2021 Wednesday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** tourism\_cruises

**Length:** 371 words

**Byline:**  Carli Teproff and Devoun Cetoute

Miami Herald

**Body**

If you're going to Walt Disney World this weekend, make sure to pack a ***mask*** because everyone will have to wear them while indoors at the park starting Friday.

On Wednesday, Disney World announced all guests -- vaccinated or not -- over the age of 2 will have to wear masks while indoors and on Disney transportation. The transportation includes buses, the monorail and Disney Skyliner. Masks still won't be required outdoors, at least for now.

It had been a month of very minimal ***COVID*** safety requirements at the park prior to Disney World returning to pandemic policies.

In June, Disney lifted most of its ***mask*** mandates, only requiring facial coverings in Disney buses, monorail and Disney Skyliner for vaccinated guests who were free to go maskless everywhere else. Unvaccinated guests were asked to wear masks indoors and on transportation.

The ***mask*** rollback comes amid an alarming spike in ***COVID***-19 cases in Florida due to the spread of the highly contagious Delta variant. This week, the Centers for Disease Control recommended new ***mask*** policies for indoor settings.

On Tuesday, CDC Director Rochelle Walensky said the agency recommended fully vaccinated people should wear masks in public indoor settings and in areas with "substantial and high transmission", including schools, to help prevent the spread of the Delta variant.

Orange County, the home of Disney World and other major theme park attractions such as Universal Orlando Resort, is regarded as a place of high community transmission by the CDC, according to its website.

Also on Wednesday, Orange County Mayor Jerry Demings had reinstated a state of emergency in the county due to high rates of ***COVID***-19 transmission, the Orlando Sentinel reported.

Florida on Tuesday had reported 16,308 new cases to the federal government, the seventh day of new daily cases over 12,000 and one of the highest single day increases since January.

Meanwhile in Miami-Dade County, Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** announced that people will once again have to wear masks in county facilities, including in libraries, recreational centers and county-owned entertainment venues.

"The numbers are clear," Levine Cava said at a press conference. "We hope that businesses will do the right thing."

**Load-Date:** July 29, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Florida COVID update for Wednesday: 16,038 new cases, highest reported since January*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:637V-YCN1-DYJM-M1SN-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

July 28, 2021 Wednesday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** coronavirus

**Length:** 1032 words

**Byline:**  Devoun Cetoute and Michelle Marchante

Miami Herald

**Body**

Florida has entered a peak of ***COVID***-19 cases not seen since January's surge as the state reported 16,038 new cases Tuesday to the federal government, the seventh consecutive day the state has reported more than 12,000 new daily cases.

The last time Florida had such high numbers of new ***COVID*** cases was on Jan. 7, when the state recorded 19,816 new cases, its highest single-day number of ***COVID*** cases.

Florida accounted for about 20 percent of Tuesday's new reported ***COVID*** cases across the United States, according to the data Florida reported to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The state also reported 92 new deaths on Tuesday.

Florida's 7-day percent positivity rate climbed to 17.21% on Monday, up from 16.79% on Sunday, the state reported to the federal agency.

The surge in cases comes at the same time the CDC, which requires all states to report its daily case numbers to the federal agency, and Miami-Dade County have issued new guidelines for masks as a result of the surging delta variant strain of the virus.

On Tuesday, CDC Director Rochelle Walensky said the agency recommends that, in areas with "substantial and high transmission" of the virus, fully vaccinated people should wear masks in public indoor settings, including schools, to help prevent the spread of the highly contagious delta variant.

On Wednesday, Miami-Dade Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** mandated masks at all county facilities, including libraries, recreational centers and county-owned entertainment venues. She is also urging businesses to require facial coverings indoors.

"The numbers are clear," Levine Cava said at a press conference. "We hope that businesses will do the right thing."

Cumulatively, Florida has recorded at least 2,534,334 confirmed ***COVID*** cases and 38,840 deaths as of Tuesday, according to the CDC.

U.S. Surgeon General Vivek Murthy last week spoke of Florida's rising caseload.

"What concerns me the most about Florida is that cases are rising at an alarming rate, hospitalizations are going up, and deaths are going up. And it's being driven by the delta variant," Murthy said in an interview with McClatchy.

"The challenge we have in Florida, and in far too many states, is we still don't have vaccination rates high enough, and in some pockets, we have actually vaccination rates that are quite low," he said.

More than 12.2 million Floridians have received at least one dose of the ***vaccine***, according to the Florida's weekly ***COVID*** reports.

But Jason Salemi, a USF researcher who is tracking Florida's ***COVID*** cases, estimates that 8 million people in Florida who are eligible for the ***vaccine*** have not been vaccinated.

Unvaccinated pockets across North, Central Florida

Parts of Central and North Florida show lower ***vaccine*** rates than the rest of the state, according to the CDC map. Liberty County, a small county in the Panhandle, had only 28.6 percent of its total residents vaccinated, according to the CDC.

Statewide, 57 percent of Florida's total population had received at least one dose of the ***vaccine***, the CDC said Wednesday, in line with the U.S. average.

Florida switched from daily to weekly reports in early June. However, the CDC is still reporting daily case counts from the states on its ***COVID*** Data Tracker.

January was the worst month of the Florida pandemic, with daily case counts routinely topping 10,000. That followed a surge from last July, when daily case counts also topped 10,000.

The latter half of July 2021 has been the start of Florida's third ***COVID***-19 surge.

***COVID***-19 cases and vaccines in South Florida

The Miami Herald can no longer include new deaths because the state stopped classifying deaths by county in its report. The CDC does not display daily case totals for counties, only weekly averages.

Miami-Dade County's seven-day case average was 11,087, as of Tuesday, according to the CDC.

In Miami-Dade, 2,002,072, or 73.7 percent of the county's total population, has received at least one dose of the ***vaccine***.

85.2% of people 12 years old and over have received at least one dose, 87.8% of people 18 and older have received at least one dose of the ***vaccine*** and 99.2% of people 65 and older have received at least one dose of the ***vaccine***, the CDC said.

The county's seven-day positivity rate was 12.74 percent from July 19-25.

Broward County's seven-day case average was 6,055 as of Tuesday.

In Broward, 1,210,489 people have received at least one dose of the ***vaccine***, or 62 percent of the total population.

71.9% of people 12 years old and over have received at least one dose, 74.3% of people 18 and older have received at least one dose of the ***vaccine*** and 94.7% of people 65 and older have received at least one dose of the ***vaccine***.

The county's seven-day percent positivity was 15.03% from July 19-25.

Palm Beach County's seven-day case average was 3,981 as of Tuesday.

In Palm Beach, 864,001 have received at least one dose of the ***vaccine***, or 57.7 percent of the total population.

65.8% of people 12 years old and over have received at least one dose, 68.2% of people 18 and older have received at least one dose of the ***vaccine*** and 88.5% of people 65 and older have received at least one dose of the ***vaccine***.

The county's seven-day percent positivity rate was 16.4% from July 19-25.

Monroe County's seven-day case average was 115 as of Tuesday.

In Monroe, 51,660 have received at least one dose of the ***vaccine***, or 69.6 percent of the total population.

77.6% of people age 12 and older have received at least one dose of the ***vaccine***. 80.3% of people 18 and older have received at least one dose of the ***vaccine*** and 99.9% of people 65 and older have received at least one dose of the ***vaccine***.

The county's seven-day percent positivity rate was 14.22% from July 19-25.

Manatee County's seven-day case average was 991 as of Tuesday.

In Manatee, 215,898 have received at least one dose of the ***vaccine***, or 53.5 percent of the total population.

60.5% of people age 12 and older have received at least one dose of the ***vaccine***. 63.2% of people 18 and older have received at least one dose of the ***vaccine*** and 86.6% of people 65 and older have received at least one dose of the ***vaccine***.

The county's seven-day percent positivity was 17.56% from July 19-25.

**Load-Date:** July 29, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Rudy Giuliani came to Miami to hammer Cuba's regime. Just a few people showed up*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:637F-10J1-DYJM-M4FG-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

July 26, 2021 Monday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** cuba

**Length:** 983 words

**Byline:**  Jimena Tavel, Michelle Marchante and Bianca Padró Ocasio

Miami Herald

**Body**

As thousands of Cuban Americans marched in Washington Monday to call for the U.S. to put more pressure on Cuba's government, former President Donald Trump's ex-lawyer Rudy Giuliani came to Miami to denounce Cuba's communist regime. He spoke to a small group of people outside of Versailles Restaurant in Little Havana.

The protests in Washington and Giuliani's rally-turned-news conference were held on July 26, which marks 68 years since Fidel Castro led his first attack against Fulgencio Batista's government in Cuba and began his revolution. July 26 is a national holiday in Cuba.

In Miami, about 10 people carrying Cuban flags and wearing shirts and caps with slogans such as "Patria y Vida" and "Cuba SOS," were outside of the landmark Cuban restaurant Monday morning as horn-honking cars drove by in support. About a dozen police lined the street and set up an impromptu watch tower in the Versailles parking lot.

Giuliani, also the former mayor of New York City, entered the restaurant at about 9 a.m. and did not come out until about 12:30 p.m. to give his remarks in a short, improvised press conference under a scorching sun. He spoke to a group of about 15 people surrounding him, including five protesters who were there since the morning and stood near him. Some of the people waiting to be seated in the restaurant for lunch also walked closer and listened in.

Standing at a makeshift microphone set up by the restaurant's main entrance, Giuliani in his brief remarks described the Cuban government as one of the most "inhumane, indecent, horrible regimes" in history. He denounced the imprisonment of artist Anyelo Troya, who filmed part of the "Patria y Vida" musical video.

He also criticized President Joe Biden for his reaction to the island's protests that erupted July 11, which Giuliani believes "will be a very important day in the history of liberty and freedom."

He said: "It took our president four days to respond to this." Then added: "And then he made a statement that's pathetic."

Biden issued a release July 12 that said in part, "We stand with the Cuban people and their clarion call for freedom and relief from the tragic grip of the pandemic and from the decades of repression and economic suffering to which they have been subjected by Cuba's authoritarian regime."

Giuliani said he hasn't seen any signs that read "give me a ***vaccine***" -- only different versions of "Cuba libertad" -- and he doesn't believe the protests have anything to do with ***COVID***-19.

"If the president of the United States can't speak up for freedom clearly, succinctly and with great strength, then he isn't a real president," Giuliani said.

"I'm here to say the American people have got to speak up even more because we have an administration that seems to be soft on communism," he said. "This is our fight as much as it is the brave Cubans' that rose up on July 11."

Giuliani said he didn't organize the rally. He didn't say who did. He also said nobody invited him -- he just happened to decide to visit Monday.

When asked why the turnout was so low, Giuliani didn't respond. One of the attendees volunteered an answer for him, half-shouting that the majority of the exile community traveled to Washington, D.C., to protest in front of the White House.

MIA\_Rudy\_Presser\_MJO\_7Former New York City Mayor Rudy Giuliani departs after holding a press conference outside of the Versailles Restaurant in Miami's Little Havana neighborhood on Monday, July 26, 2021. Giuliani spoke in support of the protests happening in Cuba.

Miami Beach resident Bob Kunst, president of Shalom International, a Jewish activist group, said he heard Sunday night from a friend that Giuliani would be at Versailles. So he woke up early to meet him.

He accomplished his mission: Kunst got to shake Giuliani's hand as the politician entered Versailles and gave him a bumper sticker that read "Boycott China," he said. "He loved it," Kunst said.

Kunst, a registered Democrat, said he attended because he wanted to show solidarity to Cubans. He wore a red cap with Trump 2020 and a white T-shirt that read: "Abajo dictadura. Military intervention. Freedom to Cuba."

South Florida has seen a wave of demonstrations in the past two weeks, with hundreds gathering and marching across Miami-Dade County in solidarity with the people in Cuba who are calling for freedom. Sunday marked two weeks since protests began in Cuba on July 11. Cuban authorities began prosecuting people who participated in the unprecedented anti-government demonstrations in summary trials last week.

'This had to come': More protests throughout Miami

Meanwhile, other Miami events in solidarity with Cubans on the island took place later Monday. A couple dozen people showed up to a "Freedom Vigil" at Hialeah Park Racing and Casino, joined by local and state officials -- including Miami-Dade County Commissioner René García, Lt. Gov. Jeanette Nuñez and Miami-Dade Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava***.

In Broward County, another protest took place in Pembroke Pines.

And in Calle Ocho, a crowd of over 100 people gathered Monday evening near the Little Havana mural and marched west on Southwest Eighth Street, carrying Cuban flags and signs that said "Freedom for Cuba." The crowd had gathered after a group of local artists invited supporters to the march, as parallel protests took place in Washington, D.C., and other major cities in the U.S. Mayra Sanchez, a protester at the march in Little Havana, said she had been out of state and hadn't been able to join any of the Miami demonstrations in the past two weeks.

"Despite the fact that I live here in the United States, I am Cuban. ... I have my mother, I have my whole family there in Cuba and it hurts me so much that that country is being destroyed by communism," said Sanchez, 63, who was joining a Cuba protest in Miami for the first time on Monday. "This had to come, [Cuban leaders] are running on empty."

**Load-Date:** July 27, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Miami-Dade opens five new COVID vaccine, testing sites as cases continue to surge*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6370-D5P1-JC3J-X1VM-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

July 24, 2021 Saturday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** coronavirus

**Length:** 360 words

**Byline:**  Devoun Cetoute

Miami Herald

**Body**

Miami-Dade County is escalating coronavirus prevention, opening five new mobile ***vaccine*** and testing sites as ***COVID***-19 case numbers reach levels not seen since the height of the pandemic.

With virus positivity and hospitalizations increasing along with the growing threat of new variants, especially the Delta, Miami-Dade and Nomi Health are working to expand vaccination and testing, the county said.

"We are extremely concerned about this new wave of ***COVID*** cases in Miami-Dade," Miami-Dade Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** said in a statement. "The numbers are very clear: the vast majority of those who end up in the hospital due to ***COVID*** are unvaccinated."

On Friday, the Florida Department of Health announced 73,166 new resident cases of ***COVID***-19 since July 16, significantly escalating the current surge of cases.

This newest batch of cases is more than seven times as many as were reported in mid-June.

Miami-Dade, which represents about 10 percent of the state's population, is accounting for about 15 percent of the state's new cases, based on Friday's report.

"We are calling on all those who are still unvaccinated to get the shot as soon as possible to protect themselves and their loved ones," Levine Cava said.

At these new mobile sites, Pfizer, Moderna and Johnson & Johnson vaccines will be offered. To register for vaccinations fill out the necessary information found here; for testing register here.

The five new locations:

Home Depot (in Deerwood): 11905 SW 152nd St.; Open 7 days a week, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Bay Harbor Islands' 95th Street Park: 1185 95th St.; Open 7 days a week, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Haulover Park: 13731 Collins Ave.; Open 7 days a week, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Sunny Isles Beach Government Center: 18070 Collins Ave.; Open 7 days a week, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Home Depot (in Hialeah): 1590 West 49th St.; Open 7 days a week, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Miami-Dade is also also strongly recommending everyone wear masks in large crowds or around those they don't know to be vaccinated, and to get tested if experiencing ***COVID***-19 symptoms.

"We have come too far and made too much progress to go back now," Levine Cava said.

**Load-Date:** July 25, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*COVID spreads on Miami-Dade County Commission as Joe Martinez tests positive*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:634W-BNX1-DYJM-M31B-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

July 14, 2021 Wednesday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** miami\_dade

**Length:** 577 words

**Byline:**  Douglas Hanks

Miami Herald

**Body**

A second Miami-Dade commissioner tested positive for ***COVID***-19 this week, as the virus continues to spread through the legislative body's staff as well.

Joe Martinez said Wednesday he's considering going to the hospital because of back pain following his diagnosis. He said he doesn't think he caught it last week in the commission chambers, days before the commission's chairman, Jose "Pepe" Diaz, tested positive.

Instead Martinez, who is vaccinated, thinks he contracted it from his wife, who was feeling ill before Martinez developed symptoms, tested positive this week and was not vaccinated.

"I think it's a coincidence," Martinez said of him and Diaz contracting the virus at roughly the same time. "I didn't get near him."

The Diaz results set off a testing blitz in the 200-person staff that makes up the commission offices. The chairman's office didn't have a tally of ***COVID***-19 test results, citing health confidentiality rules. Raquel Regalado, a commissioner who had ***COVID*** earlier in the year, said two staff members tested positive this week while she tested negative.

She said her commission office has been working remotely since the announcement Sunday that Diaz and his chief of staff, Isidro Lopez, had tested positive for ***COVID***-19 after experiencing flu-like symptoms. Both had been fully vaccinated, according to the press release issued that day.

The scattering of known cases on the commission staff follows a rebound in ***COVID*** hospitalizations in Miami-Dade, as judged by the doubling of the daily count of Jackson Health Systems patients with ***COVID***. About 73% of Miami-Dade residents age 12 and over have had at least one dose of ***vaccine***, the highest rate in Florida, where the average is 58%.

While the ***COVID*** vaccines drastically lower the chances of contracting the virus, they're also effective at reducing the severity of symptoms for those contract the virus anyway.

Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava***, who contracted ***COVID*** shortly after winning office in November, recently tested negative for the virus, a spokesperson said. On Wednesday, Levine Cava said she's not seeing a spread of the virus through county government, but concern is rising about increasing cases.

"Obviously, we see the trends," she said. "We're urging everybody to be cautious... I am personally going to be wearing masks more often."

She also said Miami-Dade plans to continue its public efforts to get people vaccinated, which includes county-run vaccination sites. "Other places aren't pursuing vaccinations," she said. "We are."

With two commissioners isolating with ***COVID*** and fears of wider exposure from the July 8 meeting, all commission committee meetings were canceled after Monday. It's not clear what will happen with the commission meeting scheduled for July 20.

In November, Gov. Ron DeSantis ended his emergency suspension of quorum rules that allowed online meetings of local governing boards, forcing commissioners to meet in person for the first time since the spring of 2020. While commissioners can still vote while participating remotely, the commission needs seven people in the chambers to comply with quorum rules -- barring a last-minute new order by DeSantis.

Martinez, who has a history of heart troubles, said he received the Pfizer ***vaccine*** several months ago. He said pain in his back on top of flu-like symptoms has him concerned enough to seek medical treatment.

"I feel ill," said Martinez, 63. "I'm probably going to wind up in the hospital now."

**Load-Date:** July 15, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Miami-Dade commission chairman, vaccinated for COVID-19, tests positive for the virus*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6347-F6R1-DYJM-M4YW-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

July 11, 2021 Sunday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** miami\_dade

**Length:** 485 words

**Byline:**  Douglas Hanks

Miami Herald

**Body**

The chairman of Miami-Dade's county commission has tested positive for ***COVID***-19 about four months after he said he was fully vaccinated for the virus -- prompting a wave of planned tests for senior county leaders and raising questions about exposure at the Surfside command center.

Chairman Jose "Pepe" Diaz has been a frequent presence in Surfside, appearing beside Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** at media events and behind closed doors with county administrators. He also presided over a commission meeting Thursday that was the second without protective plastic barriers between commission seats -- an anti-***COVID*** safeguard that went up last year and came down at Diaz's direction last month. A commission spokesperson said Monday the barriers were being reinstalled and the chambers undergoing a deep cleaning.

Rachel Johnson, communications director for Miami-Dade, said ***COVID***-19 tests are planned at the Surfside command center Monday following the Diaz diagnosis. She said county elected officials and staff who attended Thursday's commission meeting also will be tested.

That would include the top administrators in the Surfside response, including Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** (who contracted ***COVID*** in November), Fire Chief Alan Cominsky and Police Director Freddy Ramirez.

plexiglass tweet

The news gives Miami-Dade its most prominent known "breakthrough case" for ***COVID***-19 vaccines -- someone who apparently caught the virus after being fully vaccinated. While the odds are low of contracting the standard ***COVID***-19 virus after vaccination, they aren't zero. Researchers say new variants may be more effective at infecting vaccinated people.

Vaccinations also are credited with reducing the severity of ***COVID***-19 for those who contract the virus after vaccination -- with symptoms more likely to be mild than severe.

In a statement, the commission's press office said Diaz and a top aide both tested positive for the virus and were experiencing flu-like symptoms Sunday. A spokesperson said Diaz's test was on Sunday as well.

"Today Chairman Jose "Pepe" Diaz and his Chief of Staff, Isidro Lopez tested positive for ***COVID***-19. Both started experiencing flu-like symptoms earlier today and will be isolating. Staff and others who have been in close contact with them will be getting tested between today and tomorrow," the statement read. "The chairman and his chief of staff both had the ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** and will be following the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines."

There have been reports of ***COVID***-19 cases among search teams in Surfside, with members of rescue squads testing positive for the virus. Authorities described the cases as isolated.

A spokesperson for Diaz said the chairman, who is 60, received his second dose of the Pfizer ***vaccine*** in March.

This article was updated to correct the timing of when the plastic barriers were removed in the Miami-Dade Commission chambers.

**Load-Date:** July 12, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*'Freedom!' Thousands of Cubans take to the streets to demand the end of dictatorship*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6344-3FP1-DYJM-M4BD-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

July 11, 2021 Sunday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** cuba

**Length:** 2294 words

**Byline:**  Adriana Brasileiro and Nora Gámez Torres

Miami Herald

**Body**

In an unprecedented display of anger and frustration, thousands of people took to the streets Sunday in cities and towns across Cuba, including Havana, to call for the end of the decades-old dictatorship and demand food and vaccines, as shortages of basic necessities have reached crisis proportions and ***COVID***-19 cases have soared.

From the Malecón, Havana's famous seawall near the old city, to small towns in Artemisa province and Palma Soriano, the second-largest city in Santiago de Cuba province, videos live-streamed on Facebook showed thousands of people walking and riding bikes and motorcycles along streets while chanting "Freedom!" "Down with Communism!" and "Patria y Vida" -- Homeland and Life -- which has become a battle cry among activists after a viral music video turned the revolutionary slogan "Homeland or Death" on its head.

"We are not afraid!" chanted Samantha Regalado while she recorded hundreds of people walking along a narrow street in Palma Soriano.

AFP\_9ER2VYjpg.JPGPeople in several Cuban cities marched on Sunday to ask for more freedoms.

During the day, protests erupted in several cities, including the island's biggest -- Havana, Santiago, Santa Clara, Matanzas, Cienfuegos and Holguín -- but also in smaller towns like Palma Soriano, Cárdenas, Colón, Guira de Melena, Artemisa and others. Inventario, a website specializing in Cuban data, tracked at least 25 protests in different locations throughout the island.

Images circulating on social media of angry crowds overturning police cars are unseen in a country where the communist government has kept a tight grip on the population for more than six decades.

Last time Cubans took to the streets to protest against the communist government was in 1994 and Fidel Castro was alive. But the uprising, known as the Maleconazo, only took place in Havana and didn't last long, as the former Cuban leader quickly turned the demonstrations into a massive exodus after he opened Cuba's maritime borders. Thousands of Cubans left the island in makeshift boats and rickety rafts, in what became known as the balsero crisis.

Video streamed on Facebook by Antonio Miguel Cobas Jalowayski around 1 p.m. in Palma Soriano showed hundreds of protesters calling for freedom and shouting, "Down with the dictatorship" and "Down with Díaz-Canel," a reference to Cuban leader Miguel Díaz-Canel. The protesters also demanded medicine, ***COVID*** vaccines and "the end of hunger." A crowd is seen pushing a police car and shouting "the dictators just arrived," in reference to the police. Later, one protester is heard saying, "This is a peaceful demonstration."

READ NEXT: They're fed up. These videos show protesters demanding change in Cuba

Facebook user Carlos Alberto Ceballos Brito published a video around the same time showing a crowd gathering in Alquizar, a town in Artemisa province near Havana, also protesting against the government and chanting "Down with Diaz-Canel" and "Patria y Vida". In several moments the crowd used strong language to refer to Díaz-Canel, whose popularity is sharply falling as life on the island deteriorates.

In an impromptu televised address later in the afternoon, Díaz-Canel blamed the protests on U.S. efforts to tighten the embargo, with the alleged intention to "provoke a social uprising" that would justify a military intervention.

Visibly upset and raising his voice, the Cuban leader warned that protesters would face a strong response and called "all revolutionaries" to confront them on the streets "with firmness and courage."

AFP\_9ER2XXjpg.JPGMany families marched near the Capitol Building in Havana to demand improvements to their quality of life.

"We are not going to hand over the sovereignty or the independence of the people," he said. "There are many revolutionaries in this country who are willing to give our lives, we are willing to do anything, and we will be in the streets fighting."

Cuba is in the throes of its worst economic contraction in over three decades, as chronic inefficiencies and paralyzing bureaucracy have gradually eroded the country's production capacity, including the essential food and agriculture sectors. Trump-era sanctions have reduced access to vital economic lifelines like remittances, and foreign investment has plunged. Painful currency reforms this year have sent inflation soaring, and long lines for food have again become commonplace.

Now Cuba is struggling to control transmission of the coronavirus and has been setting record highs almost daily in the past few weeks. Cuba decided to make its own ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** and didn't seek to buy shots from other countries. But plans to immunize the population with a homegrown ***vaccine*** has been plagued by delays.

***COVID***-19 cases in Cuba soared to a record 6,422 on Friday, nearly twice the number registered just earlier in the week, while deaths reached 28 as the island struggles to contain the virus in high-transmission areas and in the capital Havana.

Last week calls for the government to accept humanitarian aid increased as Cubans began documenting on social media the collapse of the health system in the province of Matanzas, the epicenter of the ***COVID***-19 pandemic in the island.

Cuba tightens ***COVID***-19 measures amid record spike in cases; Delta variant was detected

The government responded by sending more doctors to the province and setting up a bank account to receive aid, but the account is in a Cuban bank under U.S. sanctions. Although Cuban officials said this week the country is open for donations, historically, the government has refused or seized the humanitarian aid coming from Cuban exiles.

In a separate video posted on Facebook on Sunday, activist Luis Manuel Otero Alcántara called on Cubans to head to the Malecón to protest against the island's authoritarian regime.

"I'm going to the street, I'm going to the Malecón, no matter the cost," he said.

Otero Alcántara went on hunger strike earlier this year to draw international attention to increased repression of artists and activists, who have stepped up calls for more civil liberties. He was forcibly removed from his home and hospitalized.

AFP\_9ET36Ejpg.JPGAP photographer Ramon Espinosa is arrested by the police while covering a demonstration against Cuban President Miguel Diaz-Canel in Havana, on July 11, 2021. - Thousands of Cubans took part in rare protests Sunday against the communist government, marching through a town chanting "Down with the dictatorship" and "We want liberty." (Photo by Adalberto ROQUE / AFP) (Photo by ADALBERTO ROQUE/AFP via Getty Images)

Later in the afternoon, Cubans were sharing videos of the police response. A Facebook video posted by user AntenaCubana shows people in Palma Soriano throwing stones at the police while a person is heard saying the police had been beating the demonstrators. Another video showed several trucks carrying special-forces police officers reportedly arriving in San Antonio de los Baños, where Cuban president Díaz-Canel showed up to speak to residents, a gesture that mimicked Castro's response to the Maleconazo in 1994.

Cuban activist Luis Manuel Otero Alcántara calls on people to gather at Havana's Malecón boardwalk to push for democracyArtist and political activist Luis Manuel Otero Alcántara, who went on hunger strike earlier this year to push for greater freedoms, calls on Cubans to gather at the Malecón boardwalk in Havana on Sunday to support democracy.

In Havana, about 300 people close to the government gathered near the capitol building shouting slogans in favor of the late President Fidel Castro and Díaz-Canel. Some people from the group assaulted an Associated Press cameraman, disabling his camera, while an AP photographer was injured by the police, according to the AP.

On Twitter, Cuban foreign minister Bruno Rodríguez suggested the protests were orchestrated by the US.

"President @DiazCanelB is in San Antonio de los Baños with the revolutionary people that are mobilized against the imperialist campaign and its salaried agents," he wrote. "We appreciate the international solidarity and support of Cubans living abroad #EliminatetheBlockade."

Bruno Rodriguez tweet

But as news of the protests around the country spread on social media -- despite reports of the government shutting down internet access -- Cubans in the capital also took to the Malecón to demand the end of the regime.

Videos posted around 3 p.m. on Facebook showed a crowd chanting "Patria y vida." Cuban journalist Abraham Jiménez Enoa reported that the police were detaining protesters gathered around 23 and L streets, at the heart of the city of Havana.

Republican Sen. Marco Rubio said he will ask President Joe Biden and Secretary of State Antony Blinken to urge members of the Cuban military to stand with the people of Cuba.

"The incompetent communist party of #Cuba cannot feed or protect the people from the virus," he tweeted.

Sen. Bob Menendez, chairman of the Senate Foreign Affairs Committee and a New Jersey Democrat, urged the U.S. to "stand in solidarity with the brave people of Cuba that are risking their lives today for change in their country and a future of Patria y Vida," according to a statement.

In Miami, Mayor Francis Suarez called an impromptu press conference to say this is the moment for an international intervention led by the United States to help the Cuban people achieve democracy and prevent "a blood bath" on the island.

"We are asking the federal government to do everything possible and not waste this moment," he said.

AFP\_9ER393jpg.JPGPeople take part in a demonstration against the government of Cuban President Miguel Diaz-Canel in Havana, on July 11, 2021. - Thousands of Cubans took part in rare protests Sunday against the communist government, marching through a town chanting "Down with the dictatorship" and "We want liberty." (Photo by YAMIL LAGE / AFP) (Photo by YAMIL LAGE/AFP via Getty Images)

Suarez also said the unprecedented protests in "more than 14 cities across Cuba" have the potential to trigger demands for change in authoritarian regimes in the entire hemisphere.

"The implications of this moment can mean freedom to so many in the hemisphere, from Nicaraguans to those who suffer under the Maduro regime in Venezuela," he said.

In support of the protesters in Cuba, hundreds of vehicles snaked their way across the City of Miami Sunday.

Miami police shut down Southwest Eighth Street from 32nd Avenue to 37th Avenue as the crowds multiplied in front of Versailles Restaurant and the area of Little Havana and Coral Gables.

In a video posted by the Miami Police Department, police officers could be seen standing with demonstrators as they chanted "Libertad!"

"[The area] is being secured by @MiamiPD in support of a demonstration and to ensure the safety of all participants,"' the department said in a tweet. "Please avoid the area and definitely as we continue monitoring.

Protesters held flags and posters that said "SOS Cuba." Many stopped traffic to sing the notes of the Cuban national anthem.

"Freedom" and "Homeland and Life," groups shouted in unison. Several people cried.

"It was time for people to go out into the streets. The misery and hunger in Cuba have to end, the repression and mistreatment of the people have to end, "said Yoselin Castro, who was in the crowd at Versailles."We have been living in misery and in major need for many years. It was time to wake up, "said Ronald Rodríguez, who also showed up outside the renown Cuban restaurant.

Miami Republican U.S. Rep. Maria Elvira Salazar and Republican state Sen. Ileana Garcia echoed his comments and asked the Biden administration to intervene by tightening the embargo against the regime, but by also sending humanitarian aid to Cuba.

Julie Chung, the State Department's Acting Assistant Secretary for the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, said Cubans are exercising "their right to peaceful assembly to express concern about rising ***COVID*** cases/deaths & medicine shortages."

"We are deeply concerned by "calls to combat" in #Cuba," she wrote on Twitter. "We call for calm and condemn any violence."

Cuban exiles rallies at Versailles Restaurant in Little Havana in support of protests in CubaCuban exiles rallies at Versailles Restaurant in Little Havana in support of protests in Cuba as thousands of Cubans took to the streets in rare protests Sunday to complain about a lack of freedom and a worsening economic situation.

Miami-Dade Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** also shared her views on Twitter, writing: "We stand united with the Cuban people on the island and across our community at this historic moment in the struggle for freedom, dignity, and basic human rights - may their courageous actions bring about real change and move us closer to the dream of a free Cuba."

Erika Guevara-Rosas, Amnesty International director for the Americas, called the spontaneous protests "incredible and powerful."

"The fear is over!" she tweeted.

Despite Díaz-Canel warnings, the uprising continued during into the early evening.

Videos circulating on social media showed crowds of demonstrators walking through streets near the Malecón in Central Havana, around the Capitol building and in the town of Regla, across Havana bay.

A video broadcast on the YouTube channel of an influencer known as Paparazzi Cubano seems to show protesters in Camagüey throwing stones at a police car and several police officers, while sounds of what appear to be gunshots can be heard.

Other images surfacing late Sunday show military deployment in Holguin and the police beating demonstrators in Isla de la Juventud, the island just south of the mainland, as security forces responded to Díaz-Canel's call to stop the uprising.

"Over our dead bodies," Díaz-Canel said.

El Nuevo Herald reporter Carlos Martinez contributed to this report.

**Load-Date:** July 12, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*99 feared missing in rubble of collapsed condo in Surfside as search, vigil continue*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:630D-M801-DYJM-M434-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

June 24, 2021 Thursday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** miami\_beach

**Length:** 3613 words

**Byline:**  Marie-Rose Sheinerman, Samantha J. Gross, Bianca Padró Ocasio, Douglas Hanks and Daniel Chang

Miami Herald

**Body**

After the dust had settled and the fog of incredulity had lifted, Soriya Cohen had only prayer and hope and questions -- lots of questions -- about the abrupt and violent collapse of a 12-story oceanfront condominium tower in Surfside early Thursday morning.

NEW UPDATED STORY: Heartbreaking task of recovering bodies underway at condo site. Four deaths confirmed

First and foremost in Cohen's mind was the whereabouts of her husband, Brad Cohen, whom she had not seen or heard from since part of the Champlain Towers South Condo came crashing down, wiping away 55 units in mere seconds.

Brad Cohen was inside one of those units on the 11th floor along with his brother, Gary Cohen, said Soriya Cohen, when the building collapsed at 1:23 a.m., the time that Miami-Dade Fire Rescue first responded to a call for help at the condominium tower. Soriya Cohen had spent the night with their daughter at a different building in neighboring Miami Beach.

"We can't find him," Soriya Cohen said Thursday afternoon, showing anyone who could help a photo of her husband that she keeps in her iPhone. She said rescuers took a DNA sample of their daughter in case they need it to identify Brad Cohen's body.

"He hasn't responded for 15 hours. ... Maybe he's alive, I don't know."

'The apartments were gone.' Survivors recount harrowing escape from collapsed condo

Those last three words underscored the agony shared by dozens of survivors and loved ones of the missing who gathered at the Surfside Community Center seeking answers and solace. And they echo the response of many who cannot fathom how a concrete structure housing dozens of homes could suddenly fall to the ground.

"It's the unimaginable," said Miami-Dade County Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava***. "It's a terrible, terrible nightmare that we have here on Surfside."

It will likely be months or even years before engineers and other experts know exactly why a part of the Champlain Towers South came crashing down.

Before those answers are found, search and rescue crews will continue the painstaking work of picking through a mountain of rubble, looking for even the faintest signs of life that might be buried inside the two-story-high pile of debris.

More than 20 hours after the partial collapse, the death toll remained unknown. Officials confirmed at least one death, and said 35 survivors were pulled from the wreckage, with 10 injured persons treated at the scene and at least two transported to a hospital.

Miami-Dade County police said as many as 99 people are reported missing. There were 102 people from the building who had been accounted for. The part of the tower that collapsed held 55 units. The remainder of the 136-unit tower remained standing, though residents have been evacuated.

The disaster occurred while most who live in the building were in bed. The tower at 8777 Collins Ave. crumpled with "a bang that just kept on going," said former Surfside Vice Mayor Barry Cohen, who moved into a third-floor unit in the tower in June 2018.

Barry Cohen said he and his wife gathered their belongings and rushed out of their condo after they were awakened by the noise and realized what was happening. Unable to navigate through the debris, twisted metal and a flooded parking garage, the couple returned to their unit and called for help from the balcony.

The Cohens and their two neighbors waited 20 minutes before firefighters rescued them from their balcony with a cherry picker bucket.

"I was worried it was all going to go down," Barry Cohen said.

Security camera footage of the collapse looked eerily similar to a controlled demolition, minus the flash of explosives. One side of the tower buckled first before more of the structure collapsed into a pile of rubble. The cause of the collapse is unknown, though one building expert deemed it "an oddity of biblical proportions" for the 40-year-old structure to fall unexpectedly.

A different expert, John Pistorino, who has a 50-year career as a consulting engineer in Miami, said such a collapse "should never happen."

"It is so dramatically unusual that it's hard to compare to anything other than a building going down in a city in a state of war," said Pistorino, who played a key role in drafting the county's 40-year building recertification policy and other building safety rules. Champlain Towers South was in the early stages of its 40-year recertification.

'There's a lot of uncertainty'

In a scene reminiscent of 9/11, evacuees and family and friends of residents gathered at the nearby Surfside Community Center, many carrying photos of missing loved ones. More than 700 missing-person reports came in to a Miami-Dade hot line and web page set up to track victims of the collapse, according to the county's Emergency Operations Center.

Levine Cava, the county mayor, said in an evening video briefing with county commissioners that the count of missing people remains an estimate. She said "102 people who were in the building have been accounted for."

"Unfortunately," Levine Cava added, "99 at least are unaccounted for. Some of those may not have been in the building."

Sergio Barth, a Doral resident, said his brother, Luis Fernando Barth, was visiting South Florida from Colombia with his wife and 14-year-old daughter to get the ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine***. The family was staying in a friend's condo at Champlain Towers South.

"Early this morning I heard on Colombian radio that a building had collapsed in Surfside, and I knew the area," Barth said, "and I started putting the dots together."

Barth soon discovered that his brother and family are among the missing.

"There's a lot of uncertainty," he said, "no useful information right now."

As news of the collapse spread across the globe, relief organizations and others launched efforts to support those who were forced to flee their homes with little or no belongings. An online donation fund for victims and families, set up by the Shul of Bal Harbour, had raised more than $160,000 from more than 1,300 donors as of Thursday afternoon.

Others who jumped in to help include the Miami Heat, the Miami Heat Charitable Fund, the Coral Gables Community Foundation, the Key Biscayne Community Foundation and the Miami Foundation, working together to build a hardship fund.

The disaster has united hundreds of strangers seeking to help, said Ryan Mermer, a member of the Shul who started a WhatsApp group chat to rally the community and collect blankets, phone chargers, sweatshirts, pain relievers, water and snacks.

"People are coming together more than ever," Mermer said.

By Thursday evening, volunteers had put up signs outside the Surfside Community Center telling drivers to take their donations elsewhere. The family reunification center had received more than it could handle, said a volunteer with the American Red Cross.

MIA\_100BuildingCollapse24NEWPPP.jpgMultiple Miami-Dade County Fire Rescue trucks are on the scene at the Champlain Towers South Condo in Surfside, 8777 Collins Avenue, after the early morning collapse in Surfside, Florida, Thursday, June 24, 2021.

Officials promise help, answers

Local, state and national leaders addressed the building collapse on Thursday, offering to send help and find answers.

Surfside Commissioner Eliana Salzhauer held out hope that search and rescue dogs would lead workers to survivors in the rubble. By late morning, she noted the troubling silence. "They aren't turning up very much," she said. "No one is celebrating anyone being pulled out."

Salzhauer said the Champlain Towers South was undergoing the required 40-year recertification to ensure its structural integrity, and that the building's roof was being redone. She added that a building inspector had visited Champlain Towers on Wednesday, but she did not know what the inspector found. It is unknown if any construction activity contributed to the disaster.

"The residents that I talked to were not aware that there was some kind of problem or issue that would cause something like this," Salzhauer said.

Gov. Ron DeSantis, speaking at a press conference one block away from the Champlain Towers, said he toured the scene and what he saw was worse than he had expected.

"The TV doesn't do it justice," DeSantis said. "It is really, really traumatic to see the collapse of a massive structure like that."

DeSantis thanked first responders for risking their lives to search for survivors when it was unknown if the building was stable enough to enter.

He said engineers and other experts would probe the evidence to determine what went wrong.

"You're not going to have those answers immediately," he said.

News of the disaster also reached the White House, where President Joe Biden said he had a "long discussion" with Levine Cava, the county mayor, about the building collapse.

Biden put the onus on DeSantis to declare a state of emergency so federal resources, including FEMA help, can be deployed.

"We are ready to move federal resources immediately," Biden said. "We can't go in and do it but FEMA is down there taking a look at what's needed, including whether the rest of the buildings need to be evacuated as well."

He said federal resources could help with recovery, cleanup and shelter for families who were displaced.

"I'm waiting for the governor to declare an emergency," Biden said. "We're working on it, and I made it clear, I say to the people of Florida: Whatever help you want that the federal government can provide, we're waiting. Just ask us, we'll be there. We'll be there."

DeSantis signed an emergency declaration early Thursday evening.

E4pLnxLXwAEHR1u.jpgPart of Champlain Towers South Condo, in Surfside, collapsed early Thursday morning. Miami-Dade search and rescue is combing through the rubble for victims and survivors.

'Cries for help' and an eerie premonition

As help begins to pour in for victims and families of the collapse, survivors of the disaster and their loved ones relayed the details of their traumatizing experiences.

Adriana Chi was waiting outside Jackson Memorial Hospital's Ryder Trauma Center in Miami early Thursday, worried about two relatives inside and a third she had yet to locate.

Chi said her brother, sister-in-law and teenage niece lived in a ninth floor unit of the Champlain Towers South. Chi was able to speak with her niece ahead of her emergency surgery at Ryder, and she said the 16-year-old recalled being awakened by her mother and a shaking building before the floor gave way beneath them.

"She felt the building shake," said Chi, a nurse practitioner. "Then everything collapsed."

Chi said her sister-in-law, a psychologist, was taken to Ryder as well but that she did not know the whereabouts of her brother, an attorney. Chi said her father has owned the unit in Champlain Towers South for about 30 years, and that leaks were a chronic problem.

Between tearful cellphone calls in the hospital's driveway and hugs with other family members gathered outside, Chi recalled an eerie premonition she had shared with her brother.

"The last time I was there, I looked at him and I said, 'I am serious. This building is going to collapse.' "

Alfredo Lopez, who lived in a sixth-floor corner unit with his wife and son, said he awoke to a series of loud booms that shook his bed and startled his family. They evacuated the building with a group, making their way out through a crack in a crumbling wall near the crumpled pool deck, where Lopez and others could hear what they could not see through the thick cloud of dust.

"Exiting the pool area, I could hear people crying and screaming for help," Lopez said.

118 BUILDING COLLAPSE DS.jpgThe rubble at Champlain Towers South Condo in Surfside, located at 8777 Collins Avenue, after the early morning collapse on Thursday, June 24, 2021.

A desperate rescue scene

The massive search-and-rescue effort began before dawn. Rescuers from Miami-Dade's Urban Search and Rescue Team worked quickly to free residents from the warped steel and concrete that trapped them in their homes, sometimes cutting through balconies to reach survivors in the part of the structure that was still standing.

At an evening press conference, Miami-Dade's mayor emphasized the rescue operation was proceeding overnight -- and that images of a seemingly idle scene didn't always capture the intensity of efforts below the surface.

"We are working round the clock," said Levine Cava, who oversees county fire and police agencies. U.S. Sen. Marco Rubio, a Republican from Miami-Dade, also touched on complaints that efforts weren't moving quickly enough.

"Sometimes when you watch it on television, it can be hard to ask for patience in a time like this," he said.

Alfredo "Freddy" Ramirez, the county's police director, said his agency's victim coordinators were helping counsel relatives of the missing, including those frustrated by the rescue pace.

"This is a slow process. We understand their pain," he said. Ramirez said with rescue crews often underneath the rubble, the scene can look misleadingly quiet on television. "They don't see from above what's really going on," he said.

Jose "Pepe" Diaz, chairman of the county commission, said the rescue operation will continue until "the moment hope is gone."

"They're working hard -- hard," he said. "They're taking every precaution. And they hope and pray."

Levine Cava visited the family reunification center at about 9:30 p.m. The center on 93rd street was still active, with tables of food, sweet snacks and drinks. In one of the rooms, families sat in front of a TV playing footage of the collapse. The mayor thanked volunteers and spoke to family members, urging them to be patient as rescue workers search for survivors.

"We are coming to an end of the first day," Levine Cava. "There is still hope."

For family members of those who survived, news of their loved one's rescue felt like divine intervention.

111 BUILDING COLLAPSE DS.jpgPeople look at the rubble at Champlain Towers South Condo, 8777 Collins Avenue in Surfside, after part of the building collapsed on Thursday, June 24, 2021.

Santos Mejía, 50, said he was awakened by a predawn call from his wife, who was inside a unit on the ninth floor of the collapsed south condo. She is an overnight caretaker for an elderly disabled woman.

"She said she heard a big explosion. It felt like an earthquake," Mejía said.

As he recounted rushing over to the beach from their home near Miami International Airport, Mejía's cellphone rang. It was his wife.

"They're bringing you down?" he said. Tears welled in his eyes. "Thank God."

As the sun rose, the rescues got trickier. A mother and child were pulled from the rubble, but the mother's leg had to be amputated to free her, said Frank Rollason, director of Miami-Dade Emergency Management.

Boy pulled from rubble after Surfside building collapseA boy was pulled from rubble by firefighters after part of Champlain Towers South Condo in Surfside, Florida, collapsed around 2 a.m. on June 24.

Just after 8 a.m., Rollason told the Miami Herald that emergency workers believed they had cleared all easily reachable survivors from inside the tower.

"Everyone who is alive is out of the building," he said.

One of the search-and-rescue dogs detected someone trapped under a mountain of concrete around that time. Officials first believed the trapped person was a child but later identified her as an adult woman.

Rollason said they lost voice contact with her shortly after, but they had not given up on the rescue effort.

"We're still working on getting to her," he said.

117 BUILDING COLLAPSE DS.jpgFire rescue personnel conduct search and rescue with dogs in the rubble of the collapsed Champlain Towers South Condo in Surfside on Thursday, June 24, 2021.

Miami-Dade Fire Rescue spokeswoman Maggie Castro said more than 80 rescue units from all over the county rushed to the initial scene. Well into the morning she said the department was in "100% rescue mode."

She said the department used dogs and sensitive microphones and cameras that can pick up the slightest sounds, even breathing. But even with the most advanced technology, she added that only so many rescuers could sift through the wreckage at one time because they were uncertain about the stability of the debris.

"We have weather to contend with and we have the danger of the building," Castro said. "We're very careful not to disturb the pile."

The equipment used by search and rescue teams is so sensitive Castro said, "that we would even be able to hear people scratching."

MIA\_Building\_Collapse\_MJO\_5.JPGFamily, residents and tourists from the Champlain Towers and nearby buildings wait for updates at a reunification center at 9301 Collins Ave. in Surfside on Thursday, June 24, 2021. A part of the Champlain Towers South Condo at 8777 Collins Ave. collapsed at 1:23 a.m. Thursday.

How many missing?

Surfside Vice Mayor Tina Paul said authorities are compiling a list of residents who remain unaccounted for following the tower's collapse.

A Realtor with COMPASS who has multiple listings in the building told the Herald about 70% of the 136 units were occupied at the time by primary or secondary homeowners. It's unclear how many other units were in use for short-term rentals.

Surfside Mayor Charles Burkett said authorities are compiling names called into Surfside's missing persons hotline.

"I think we're trying to piece together who's missing by tallying up those calls," he said.

113 BUILDING COLLAPSE DS.jpgA Miami-Dade Police helicopter flies over the rubble of the Champlain Towers South Condo in Surfside, which collapsed in the early morning hours, wiping away 55 condo units.

Burkett said the building manager does not keep a log of residents, but logs visitors. First responders were using the list to try and account for the missing.

Dozens gathered at the town's community center, where the Red Cross was assisting those who were waiting to hear about missing loved ones. Evacuees of nearby condo towers and hotels, who were hoping for information on a place to stay and how to gather their belongings, also filled the community center.

Rollason said the building to the south, which is newer, is far enough away that it appears to be fine for now. The building on the north, he said, is older and has been evacuated. The Solara Surfside hotel, which is next to the tower, has also been evacuated.

Some residents said they have lived in the condominium complex for decades and never had any significant problems with the structure until construction began on a new building just south of Champlain Towers South. The construction caused tenants to complain about shaking last year, said Norma Arbide, who has lived in the complex since 1987.

100 BUILDING COLLAPSE DS.jpgA bunk bed is seen in the rubble at Champlain Towers South Condo in Surfside, located at 8777 Collins Avenue, a part of which collapsed in the early morning in Surfside, Florida, Thursday, June 24, 2021.

The new building is located in Miami Beach, not Surfside, and Arbide said her neighbors were complaining because, "Their building was shaking and vibrating when they were digging and blasting at the construction site. That could have caused cracks or some kind of damage."

Surfside condo collapse caught on surveillance videoA surveillance camera from a nearby building caught the exact moment part of Champlain Towers South Condo collapsed on June 24.

Burkett, the Surfside mayor, noted that the building is not as old as many in the surrounding area, and that "there is no reason for a building to come down like that." There are one-foot gaps between stories where there used to be 10, he said.

"This doesn't happen," he said. "I've been here my whole life, and I haven't seen anything like this happen."

When asked if he believed the collapse was an accident, Burkett wouldn't hazard a guess.

"What I can say is that a building has fallen down .... I expect that this building is not salvageable at this point."

He said there had been construction work on the building's roof over the last 30 days, and that, "We're certainly going to look at that."

Photo Gallery: Building collapse in Surfside | Thursday, June 24, 2021Photos from scene where part of Champlain Towers South Condo at 8777 Collins Ave., collapsed around 2 a.m on June 24, 2021.

Peter Dyga, president and CEO of a Florida chapter of the Associated Builders and Contractors, a national construction trade association, called the partial collapse at the Champlain Towers "an oddity of biblical proportions."

"People have to remember, there are thousands of buildings of this height or taller in South Florida, millions worldwide ... This does not happen. Clearly, something was wrong," Dyga said.

"We need to find what happened and make sure if there was any kind of negligence we hold people accountable," Dyga said.

Dyga urged Floridians not to jump to conclusions as investigators assess architectural plans, engineering calculations, construction materials, and maintenance records to try to determine what went wrong.

"This is going to be probably multiple years in trying to figure out what happened here. There are so many variables," he said. "It's probably more than likely going to be a combination of bad things."

To Floridians living in other high-rise condos, Dyga stressed calm. "People do not have to worry about their building falling down," he said.

Colapse surfside six ekm.jpgPart of Champlain Towers South Condo at 8777 Collins Ave., collapsed at 1:23 a.m. on June 24, 2021.

Miami Herald staff writers Joey Flechas, Charles Rabin, Alex Harris, Linda Robertson, Mary Ellen Klas, Sarah Blaskey, Martin Vassolo and David J. Neal contributed to this story, as did McClatchy Washington Bureau reporters Alex Daugherty and Alex Roarty.

Condo collapse Surfside Callout

Miami flash briefing player embed

**Load-Date:** May 12, 2022

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*'Tsunami' of violence erupts, DeSantis pursues school rules over race, and cruise titans tiptoe around law*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:62X8-XP11-JC3J-X17Y-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

June 14, 2021 Monday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** politics\_policy\_in\_sunshine\_state

**Length:** 1540 words

**Byline:**  Mary Ellen Klas

Newsletters |

**Body**

It's Monday, June 14. Happy Flag Day. Two hundred and forty four years ago in 1777, the Second Continental Congress meeting in Philadelphia took a break from writing the Articles of Confederation and passed a resolution designating the stars and stripes as the official flag of the United States.

During the war of independence against the British, colonists hadn't fought under a single flag as most regiments fought under their own flags. President George Washington realized the new nation needed a single banner as a symbol of freedom and to serve as both a unifying factor, and a confidence builder. So Old Glory was designated the official flag.

During these polarizing times, it's good to remember we called ourselves the United States and gave ourselves a single flag.

WHAT WE'RE WATCHING

Banning what's not taught: Gov. Ron DeSantis got last week off to a divisive start when he addressed the State Board of Education and requested it adopt a rule that bans critical race theory and "The 1619 Project" from Florida's curriculum.

Neither are currently part of the curriculum, so it was a preemptive strike. "The 1619 Project" is a New York Times initiative that re-centered the focus on the nation's history on the year the first enslaved Africans arrived. Critical race theory is the scholarship around the notion that racial biases are embedded in our legal system as well as our housing, policing, medical care and other systems. It contradicts the notion that the U.S. presents every American with an equal opportunity to be prosperous and acknowledges the importance of historical context.

The governor argued that while current state law requires the teaching of slavery and civil rights, "Critical Race Theory teaches kids to hate our country and to hate each other. It is state-sanctioned racism and has no place in Florida schools." Previously, he said he would politicize this further, vowing "to get the Florida political apparatus involved so we can make sure there's not a single school board member who supports critical race theory." The board approved it unanimously.

Fundraising focus: Meanwhile, DeSantis was on the West Coast most of the week for a series of fundraisers in San Diego, Los Angeles, Irvine and Manhattan Beach, California, as well as Las Vegas, Nevada, as he prepares his 2022 reelection campaign.

MIA\_fl-publix-shooting-royal-palm-beach2-FL0117477961Law enforcement officers are on scene investigating a shooting at a Publix along Okeechobee Blvd. in Royal Palm Beach on Thursday, June 10, 2021.

'Tsunami' of violence: Back in Florida, mass shootings continued to rattle communities.

Timothy J. Wall opened fire in a Royal Palm Beach Publix Thursday morning killing a one-year-old boy and a grandmother before dying himself. In South Miami Dade, police detectives arrested three teens believed to be part of the gang feud that led to a mass shooting at a graduation party on Sunday in Kendall that killed a state corrections officer.

Miami-Dade County's top police officer called these, and a mass shooting in Miami over Memorial Day weekend, a "tsunami" of violence. The county commission met in a special meeting to allocate $7.8 million to provide jobs to young offenders. It is part of a Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava***'s "Peace and Prosperity Plan" to reduce shootings, increase surveillance, including social-media monitoring by police, and reduce shootings over the next two years.

DeSantis nods to victims: DeSantis ordered that flags remained at half-staff in honor of the five-year anniversary of the Pulse Nightclub shooting in Orlando, and on May 30 he tweeted his condolences for the two victims and 20 injured during the Memorial Day weekend shooting.

pulse.jpgIn 2016, 49 people were killed in a mass shooting at Pulse nightclub in Orlando, Florida

Biden commemorates deaths: By contrast, President Joe Biden issued a nine-paragraph statement commemorating the victims and their families on the anniversary of the Pulse nightclub shooting. He also said he would sign a bill designating the location of the nightclub as a national memorial, "enshrining" the spot where happiness and acceptance once governed, would be "hallowed ground."

And on Tuesday night, he surprised graduates of Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland with a video address, telling the class it should celebrate "turning pain into purpose and darkness to light" after surviving the deadliest high school shooting in American history, followed by the disruptions of the coronavirus pandemic.

IMG\_4989.jpgGubernatorial candidate and U.S. Rep. Charlie Crist, D-St. Petersburg, (left) at a campaign stop in Miami Beach on Friday morning with Mayor Dan Gelber, speaking with local small business leaders.

Crist vows gun reforms: Democratic gubernatorial candidate and former Florida Gov. Charlie Crist seized on the rash of violence and promised during a campaign stop in Miami Beach Friday that he would work to pass gun reforms in response to deadly shootings.

WHAT WE'RE TALKING ABOUT

Titanic clash: The return of operations for one of South Florida's most iconic industries has turned into a battle of the heavyweights. The clash pits DeSantis, emboldened by growing approval ratings, against the cruise industry, a powerful pillar of Florida tourism. While the governor refuses to back off his ban on cruise ships seeking ***vaccine*** passports, the industry is quietly crafting a work-around that imposes more protections on the unvaccinated, but charges them for it.

IMG\_1542228452\_Celebrity\_5\_1\_MNFAL844\_L451222758.JPGCelebrity's new ship, Celebrity Edge, features a distinctive bow and an orange steel hydraulic hoist, for lifting and lowering the Magic Carpet.

Passengers test positive: Just five days into the first cruise in the Caribbean in seven months, the value of vaccinations became evident. Two passengers aboard the Celebrity Millennium ship tested positive for ***COVID***-19. Like almost all passengers aboard, the cabin mates were vaccinated and reportedly asymptomatic.

Judge grills CDC: Although the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is recommending that all cruise passengers be vaccinated, it is not requiring it, DeSantis has sued the CDC suggesting their rules regulating whether cruise companies can resume travel are unfair to the industry. For three and a half hours last week, a federal judge grilled the agency about the rules and whether the CDC has the authority to require cruise companies to try to prevent the spread of disease.

Gambling push back: Miami Dade communities continue to push back against the prospect of expanded gambling in the region weeks after the governor negotiated a $500 million gaming deal with the Seminole Tribe of Florida. As the deal is being reviewed for approval by the federal government, Miami Beach Mayor Dan Gelber sent a letter to the U.S. Department of the Interior urging it to reject what he calls a "tortured artifice," negotiated with the corrupt intent to expand gambling in Florida -- in violation of both state and federal law.

IMG\_IMG\_IMG\_TrumpDoral\_0\_3\_1\_R8FOE08E\_L466852458.JPGPresident Donald Trump reported $76 million in income from his Trump National Doral resort in 2018, up slightly from $75 million in 2017 but down considerably from 2016.

Last week, the city council of Doral, which is home to Trump's resort, voted unanimously to ban gambling and casinos from the city unless approved by residents in a referendum.

Jones rebuked: Rebekah Jones, who managed Florida's ***COVID*** dashboard until she was fired, had her account suspended by Twitter last week for "platform manipulation and spam." The suspension came after Jones repeatedly shared a recent Miami Herald article about law enforcement officers raiding her home, her observations during her time at the Florida Department of Health and more.

Bitcoin ***COVID***: Days after Miami hosted the 2021 Bitcoin Conference, several attendees reported that they tested positive for ***COVID***-19. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention still recommends people avoid large events and gatherings but the event attracted thousands, with at least 12,000 people circulating through an enclosed space, most of them maskless.

Omar feud: Three South Florida Democrats signed a statement with nine of their U.S. House colleagues criticizing recent statements by Minnesota Democratic Rep. Ilhan Omar that lumped together alleged human rights abuses committed by the United States and Israel with Hamas and the Taliban. U.S. Reps. Debbie Wasserman Schultz, Ted Deutch and Lois Frankel, who are Jewish, urged Omar, who is Muslim, "to clarify her words placing the U.S. and Israel in the same category as Hamas and the Taliban."

Stay well and we'd love to hear from you. Miami Herald Capitol Bureau Chief Mary Ellen Klas curates the Politics and Policy in the Sunshine State newsletter. If you have any ideas or suggestions, please drop me a note at [*meklas@miamiherald.com*](mailto:meklas@miamiherald.com)

Special offer: The Miami Herald needs your support if we are to continue to supply the meaningful local journalism you count on during these unprecedented times. We've lowered our monthly rate for unlimited digital access to $.99 a month. Check it out!

Know someone who'd like to get this newsletter? Send this to a friend to receive it weekly.

**Load-Date:** June 14, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*They're taking the COVID vaccine on the road, reaching Miami people who don't have homes*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:62WM-BDY1-JC3J-X4XB-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

June 10, 2021 Thursday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** coronavirus

**Length:** 1327 words

**Byline:**  Pedro Portal

Miami Herald

**Body**

The Miami-Dade County Homeless Trust has been going to homeless hot spots and shelters across Miami-Dade, making sure that people experiencing homelessness have access to the ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine***.

The Trust is working with Johnson & Johnson's ***COVID vaccine***, which is administered in one shot, and has been dispatching mobile testing teams. The Trust's goal is to vaccinate all of the homeless population in June, when state-run ***vaccine*** sites will be closing. (The state is leaving ***vaccine*** distribution to county health departments and local providers.)

It is not an easy task to convince some of the homeless people to get the ***vaccine***, especially those who have lived on the streets the longest, said Ricky Leath, outreach specialist with the City of Miami.

Leath convinced Gary Smith, 58, to get vaccinated since it was going to be one shot and "he won't have to wear the ***mask*** anymore." But, Leath said, Smith expressed reservations, saying he "hoped the ***vaccine*** will work and won't kill him."

A former homeless man himself, Leah feels "optimistic" about the Trust's plan.

The Trust is teaming with the Florida Division of Emergency Management to conduct the outreach.

Jorge García, who came down from Tallahassee and has lived in the streets for more than 10 weeks, was "happy to be vaccinated to stop using the ***mask***." He urged others to do the same "in order to stay healthy."

García also agreed to be taken to a shelter; the outreach teams are trying to persuade people to move into the shelters, where they can gain access to housing, food, counseling and educational opportunities.

Since the pandemic began last spring, more than 20,000 ***COVID***-19 tests have been administered to homeless people in Miami-Dade, said Ronald Book, the Trust's chairman.

The outreach will run through June 11.

MIA\_105HomelessVacMov21NEWPPPThe Miami-Dade County Homeless Trust is teaming up with the Florida Division of Emergency Management to conduct vaccination tours throughout unsheltered homeless hot spots. Some homeless living on the sidewalk behind the former Macy's store in downtown Miami have refused to be vaccinated by the medical staff visiting the homeless across Miami-Dade to ensure they have easy access to the ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine***, on May 21, 2021.

MIA\_100aHomelessVacMov21NEWPPPJames Kellom, a homeless man who said he has been living in the street for almost 40 years in downtown Miami, reacts after being vaccinated. The Miami-Dade County Homeless Trust is teaming up with the Florida Division of Emergency Management to conduct vaccination tours throughout homeless hot spots and shelters across Miami-Dade.

MIA\_002BusCovid1900NEWPPPNurse Saawana Plant gives a shot of the (J&J/Janssen) ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** to Daniel Chaviano, a homeless man who is living under the I-95 underpass in downtown Miami, May 21, 2021.

MIA\_003BusCovid1900NEWPPPDaniel Chaviano, a homeless man living under the I-95 underpass in downtown Miami, sits by his tent after being vaccinated by medical staff with the Miami-Dade County Homeless Trust, which teamed up with the Florida Division of Emergency Management to conduct vaccination tours throughout unsheltered homeless hot spots and shelters across Miami-Dade.

MIA\_101HomelessVacMov21NEWPPPView of a multi dosages of (J&J/Janssen) ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** given to the homeless population living in downtown Miami as the Miami-Dade County Homeless Trust and the Florida Division of Emergency Management conduct vaccination tours throughout unsheltered homeless hot spots and shelters across Miami-Dade.

MIA\_103HomelessVacMov21NEWPPPNurse Sulem Yague gives a shot of the (J&J/Janssen) ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** to Reynol Perez, a homeless man who is living in North Miami Avenue in downtown Miami, Friday, May 21, 2021.

MIA\_105aHomelessVacMov21NEWPPPRon L. Book, chair of the Miami-Dade Homeless Trust, talks on the phone as Outreach Specialist Johanna Carrasco comforts Belkis Perez, a homeless woman who is living under the I-95 underpass, after she received a shot of the (J&J/Janssen) ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine***.

MIA\_109HomelessVacMov21NEWPPPA group of homeless lined up to be vaccinated with the (J&J/Janssen) ***COVID***-19 ***Vaccine*** as the Miami-Dade County Homeless Trust, teaming up with the Florida Division of Emergency Management, conducts vaccination tours throughout unsheltered homeless hot spots.

MIA\_106HomelessVacMov21NEWPPPNurse Niurka Pérez gives a shot of the (J&J/Janssen) ***COVID***-19 ***Vaccine*** to Catherine Ortiz, a homeless woman who is living under the I-95 underpass in downtown Miami.

MIA\_110HomelessVacMov21NEWPPPA homeless man with his dog sits under the I-95 underpass right across from a mobile vaccination post as the Miami-Dade County Homeless Trust and the Florida Division of Emergency Management conduct vaccination tours throughout unsheltered homeless hot spots on Friday 21, 2021.

MIA\_107HomelessVacMov21NEWPPPRon L. Book, Chair of the Homeless Trust, tries to convince a group of homeless living on the sidewalk behind the former Macy's store in downtown Miami, to get vaccinated with the (J&J/Janssen) ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine***.

MIA\_111HomelessVacMov21NEWPPPNurse Niurka Pérez gives a shot of the (J&J/Janssen) ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** to Khriss Montenegro, a homeless man living in downtown Miami as part of the Miami-Dade County Homeless Trust and the Florida Division of Emergency Management's vaccination tours throughout to ensure people experiencing homelessness have easy access to the ***vaccine***, on May 21, 2021.

MIA\_114HomelessVacMov21NEWPPPNurse Niurka Pérez gives a shot of the (J&J/Janssen) ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** to Willie Barber, a homeless man living in downtown Miami.

MIA\_116HomelessVacMov21NEWPPPUberne Vargas, a homeless man living in downtown Miami, gets a shot of the (J&J/Janssen) ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** from Nurse Niurka Pérez as part of vaccination tours throughout unsheltered homeless hot spots and shelters across Miami-Dade to ensure the homeless have access to the ***vaccine***.

MIA\_115HomelessVacMov21NEWPPP (1)A syringe with a dose of the (J&J/Janssen) ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** given to the homeless population living in downtown Miami as the Miami-Dade County Homeless Trust and Florida Division of Emergency Management vaccination tours.

MIA\_117HomelessVacMov21NEWPPPFrom left: Ron L. Book, Chair of the Homeless Trust and Miami-Dade County Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava***, talk to Uberne Vargas, a homeless man in downtown Miami after he got vaccinated against ***COVID***-19 during the vaccination tour across Miami-Dade.

MIA\_119HomelessVacMov21NEWPPPReynol Perez, a homeless man living on North Miami Avenue in downtown Miami sleeps on the sidewalk after being vaccinated with the (J&J/Janssen) ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** by medical staff with the Miami-Dade County Homeless Trust on Tuesday, May 25, 2021.

MIA\_120HomelessVacMov21NEWPPPMedical staff vaccinate the homeless population living in downtown Miami at a post set up on Flagler Street with the (J&J/Janssen) ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine***. The Miami-Dade County Homeless Trust and the Florida Division of Emergency Management conducted vaccination tours to give the homeless easy access to the ***vaccine***, on May 25, 2021.

MIA\_121HomelessVacMov21NEWPPPMedical staff vaccinate the homeless population living in downtown Miami at a post set up on Flagler Street with the (J&J/Janssen) ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** on Tuesday, May 25, 2021.

MIA\_122HomelessVacMov21NEWPPPA group of homeless living in downtown Miami are kept under observation for 30 minutes at s mobile ***COVID***-19 vaccination spot for Miami's homeless on Flagler Street after getting vaccinated with the (J&J/Janssen) ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine***.

MIA\_123HomelessVacMov21NEWPPPA homeless woman looks out from a tent set up under the I-95 underpass right across from a mobile vaccination site, part of the effort to give the homeless access to the ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine***, on May 21, 2021.

MIA\_124HomelessVacMov21NEWPPPA homeless man sits at a bench behind the Government Center, right across from a mobile vaccination post working to get the ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** to the homeless population in Miami-Dade County on May 21, 2021.

**Load-Date:** June 11, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*COVID wards are emptying out in South Florida. Doctors say it's proof vaccines work*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:62VC-V3Y1-DYJM-M43M-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

June 5, 2021 Saturday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** coronavirus

**Length:** 970 words

**Byline:**  Ben Conarck

Miami Herald

**Body**

At the height of Florida's summer ***COVID***-19 surge, there were more than 2,000 people hospitalized with the novel illness in the epicenter of Miami-Dade County. Now, with 1.2 million people in the county fully vaccinated, that number has dropped to below 300 for the first time since mid-October.

The plummet comes as hospital ***COVID*** units are emptying out across the state, where fewer than 1,800 people are being treated for the disease statewide, compared to the late July height of about 9,500.

In South Florida, hospital leaders are attributing the patient plunge to the efficacy of the three federally authorized vaccines. About 60% of Floridians 25 and older have received at least one dose of a ***COVID vaccine***. That percentage jumps to 66% for the 35-and-older bracket, and 70% for those 45 and older.

The vaccination rates are even higher in Miami-Dade and Broward counties, two counties hit especially hard during the pandemic.

Very few fully vaccinated people hospitalized for ***COVID***

Though most hospitals in the region say they aren't tracking how many people end up in a ***COVID*** ward despite being fully vaccinated, they've offered anecdotal observations that it's an extremely rare occurrence.

Dr. Fred Keroff, the district medical director for emergency services at Memorial Hospital System, said South Broward's public hospital network isn't tracking that statistic because it wouldn't affect how they treat patients. But based on what he was hearing from physicians and providers in the emergency department, Keroff said he was confident the vaccines are working.

"Obviously, being vaccinated has made a difference," Keroff said.

Similarly, Miami-Dade's public hospital network, Jackson Health System, said it was not tracking how many fully vaccinated ***COVID*** patients have been admitted. But the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is tracking the statistic nationally, measuring "breakthrough cases," which it defines as hospitalization or death from ***COVID*** despite being fully vaccinated.

As of June 4, approximately 137 million people had been fully vaccinated in the U.S., or 49 percent of the U.S. population 12 and over, and fewer than 3,000 of them were hospitalized due to ***COVID***, according to the CDC.

About 535 deaths of fully vaccinated people who tested positive ***COVID*** have been recorded, though 88, or 16% of them, were reported as "asymptomatic or not related to ***COVID***," according to the CDC.

One hospital that is tracking the data publicly is the Boca Raton facility of Baptist Health South Florida, the region's largest nonprofit hospital system. At Boca Raton Regional Hospital, 88 patients were admitted with ***COVID*** over the course of a month, from late April to late May. But only four of them were fully vaccinated, according to Dr. Samer Fahmy, chief medical officer at the hospital.

Of those four, two had mild, cold-like symptoms, one had no symptoms at all, and one was immuno-compromised, with "extensive medical problems," including underlying lung disease and multiple surgeries, Fahmy said.

"Despite that, after a few days in the hospital, they were discharged," Fahmy said. "We've had zero deaths [from ***COVID*** for fully vaccinated people] since we started collecting the data."

Hanks tweet

In Miami-Dade, hospitals are shifting away from onerous reporting requirements. Earlier this week, Miami-Dade Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** lifted the emergency order requiring hospitals to report ***COVID*** daily patients that had been in place since April 2020, well before the state released those data.

Levine Cava's spokeswoman said the decision was made in consultation with Dr. Peter Paige, the county's chief medical officer and an administrator at Jackson Health System, "based on our great progress in fighting the spread of ***COVID***, as shown in our data."

" ... Our hospital teams have been going over and above since the very start of this pandemic in caring for thousands of ***COVID*** patients, and keeping our community updated on critical ***COVID*** data during the height of the pandemic," said Rachel Johnson, the mayor's spokeswoman. "The hospitals do continue to report data to the state, and based on our overall ***COVID*** progress, the double reporting to the county is no longer necessary."

***COVID*** numbers fall off a cliff in Florida

All of the key metrics used to gauge the severity of the pandemic have been dropping consistently since January, according to an analysis by Jason Salemi, an epidemiologist at the University of South Florida who tracks ***COVID*** data.

Cases have dropped by about 87% since mid-January, and the average number of patients currently hospitalized has dropped by 74%, including a decrease of more than 1,200 people in the last month alone, Salemi said.

Breaking down ***COVID*** admissions by age, however, offers the best look at how the vaccines are affecting the numbers, Salemi said.

"The most heavily vaccinated subgroup in our population are seniors and we can see an 80% decrease in new admissions since January 15," Salemi said. "People 18-59 are at much lower risk of being hospitalized than seniors, but their decrease over time is less pronounced."

At Baptist's Boca Raton hospital, Fahmy, the chief medical officer, said the hospital was down to one ***COVID*** patient in the intensive care unit, and that the numbers have been declining steadily since January.

The demographics of the patients are also different, according to Fahmy. He said that the 65-and-older age group used to account for about 65% of ***COVID*** admissions, but now that's closer to 30%.

"It seems to me that that's the group that realized their risk and have the highest rates of vaccination," Fahmy said. "So we've seen a sharp decline in the older ***COVID*** patients being admitted, which is a testament to the efficacy of the vaccines."

Miami Herald Staff Writer Douglas Hanks contributed to this report.

**Load-Date:** June 7, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Push for county IDs for undocumented residents clears early vote in Miami-Dade*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:62TX-JYT1-DYJM-M4WT-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

June 2, 2021 Wednesday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** miami\_dade

**Length:** 486 words

**Byline:**  Douglas Hanks

Miami Herald

**Body**

Miami-Dade County moved closer Wednesday to establishing new identification cards for undocumented residents, people experiencing homelessness and others who can't obtain state IDs or don't want them.

County commissioners gave near unanimous approval to a long-stalled proposal for an outside group to issue ID cards with Miami-Dade's approval, an arrangement designed to avoid the creation of a government database of undocumented residents subject to public-record laws.

Broward and Palm Beach counties already have similar programs with non-profits, and advocates said the cards would make ***COVID***-19 testing and vaccinations far more appealing to Miami-Dade's sizable undocumented population.

"They have been so nervous, because patching together an identity in the beginning to get a ***vaccine*** terrified them," said sponsor Eileen Higgins, whose district includes Little Havana, with a large population of residents who aren't U.S. citizens. "This would give something that said you live in Miami-Dade County. We recognize it."

Commissioner Joe Martinez was the lone no vote, citing potential for identity theft, fraud and special confidentiality measures not afforded holders of Florida driver licenses. "If we have all of our records out in the open, so should they," he said.

The vote was a major victory for backers of the ID card program, which has languished for years before the commission. Commissioner Juan C. Zapata, who held Martinez's seat until 2016, was the first sponsor.

Zapata's proposal passed to its second sponsor, ***Daniella Levine Cava***, then a county commissioner and now the mayor. Her ID proposal died last year after the county's police director, Freddy Ramirez, came out against it. Now part of the Levine Cava administration, Ramirez urged commissioners to approve the program.

"I wouldn't want anyone to not be able to get social services they need," Ramirez said in a recent interview. "It's a humanitarian issue, and that comes first."

Even with the Wednesday win, Levine Cava still must secure commission support for a final ID card plan. That includes her choice for the outside group to administer it. While she and Higgins wanted a non-profit to issue the cards using grant funds, the tag-agency industry is lobbying to have its for-profit offices administer the program.

The resolution passed Wednesday also leaves for a future vote what details will be included on the ID card, what it will look like and other rules for securing the identification.

Miami-Dade would sanction the cards, and decide which agencies would accept them. The IDs wouldn't qualify holders to vote or drive, but could allow holders to obtain library cards, park rentals and other Miami-Dade services that require some form of identification.

"We have danced in this chamber on this before," said Commissioner Sally Heyman, first elected to the board in 2002. "But we didn't have an opportunity to make amends."

**Load-Date:** June 3, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Miami's violent weekend. Unemployment pay ends. Cruises return but with vaccine conflict.*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:62T9-9SG1-JC3J-X0T6-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

May 31, 2021 Monday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** politics\_policy\_in\_sunshine\_state

**Length:** 2269 words

**Byline:**  Mary Ellen Klas

Newsletters |

**Body**

It's Monday, May 31, Memorial Day, and time to commemorate the men and women whose profound sacrifices allow us to gather freely today.

Let's think of our fathers, mothers, uncles and aunts, cousins, brothers and sisters whose service to this country preserved our fragile freedoms.

As we struggle in this era of deep national distrust and polarization, remember those who served were protecting Republicans and Democrats. They didn't care if people watched "corporate media" or believed conspiracy theories. They didn't measure their commitment by the color of their skin or their ethnic heritage. They were devoted to all of America's people, and fought to protect the cacophony of its diverse and conflicting voices. As a gesture of gratitude, perhaps be kind to someone you disagree with today.

WHAT WE'RE TALKING ABOUT

Violence in Miami: Two people were killed and 20 wounded early Sunday morning in a shootout that began when three shooters wearing ski masks and hoodies sprayed bullets at a crowd gathered for a rap album release concert in Northwest Miami-Dade. Police said it was the worst mass shooting in the county in recent memory and punctuated a year of increasing alarm over a rise in shootings during the ***COVID***-19 pandemic. Three of those injured are in critical condition, according to police.

MIA\_10BANQUETHALLSHOOTING\_CTwo killed, up to 25 injured in mass shooting: Miami-Dade police Miami-Dade police are investigating a mass shooting at a concert that has killed two people and injured 20 to 25 others in unincorporated Northwest Miami-Dade.

Targeting gun violence: Miami-Dade County elected leaders plan to spend millions of dollars this summer targeting gun violence. The money will come from a naming-rights deal the county secured at the Miami Heat's county-owned arena. On Sunday, Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** said her "Peace and Prosperity" plan was still being updated as the administration awaits a commission vote. She said to expect more funding for police analysts to monitor social media and an expansion of the county's existing surveillance camera program.

Unemployment payments end: Florida's unemployment agency announced last week that it would stop jobless Floridians from receiving an additional $300 in federal weekly benefits starting the week of June 27. The federal program, which was set to end in September, has been giving jobless Floridians an additional $300 in weekly benefits on top of eligible state benefits, which top out at $275 per week, one of the lowest rates in the nation. But the Department of Economic Opportunity announced it would end the program early because companies have been experiencing labor shortages in the wake of the pandemic. Florida's congressional Democrats sent DeSantis a letter last week criticizing the move and noting that anyone receiving the benefits has to show they are searching for work.

MIA\_0008WilliamLehmanElemenA student at William Lehman Elementary School has tested positive for ***COVID***-19, school district officials said on Thursday, Oct. 8, 2020. The Kendall school reopened its classrooms to students earlier that week.

Reprimand over ***COVID*** transparency: A national accrediting organization slapped the Florida Department of Health for its data transparency. The reprimand came May 17, eight months after a Broward parent complained in October that DOH was not providing "accurate records regarding ***COVID***-19 infection rates in schools" and issued incomplete data. During the course of the investigation, the accrediting board noted an improvement in the public reporting of school-related case data. (See our transparency timeline for context.) By the conclusion of the investigation, the board issued its gentlest reprimand, saying that while the health department was generally in line with accreditation standards, it should have done a better job sharing the data it had with the public.

Jones granted whistleblower status: The Department of Health's Chief Inspector General Michael J. Bennett has granted whistleblower status to Rebekah Jones who was fired from the agency a year ago after raising concerns about "misleading data" being presented to the public.

Jones' complaint demonstrates "reasonable cause to suspect that an employee or agent of an agency or independent contractor has violated any federal, state or local law, rule or regulation,'' Bennett wrote. But Taryn Fenske, the DeSantis administration's communications director noted: "Whistleblower status doesn't substantiate any claims. It simply provides confidentiality, and means someone made a complaint."

Salemi trusts DOH data: Meanwhile, University of South Florida epidemiologist Jason Salemi who publishes a ***COVID*** dashboard released a video last week, explaining that he doesn't have access to the raw data at the Department of Health, but he vets DOH data and trusts it. "I don't really know the truth,'' he says but he vets what he uses. He notes how Florida's pediatric hospitalizations as presented by DOH initially didn't make sense and asked the agency to correct it and they did. He uses data from several sources on his dashboard, including DOH, and tries to present it in a meaningful way. "If I really thought there was a problem, I would immediately not present that data." Just as important, he said, is putting the data in its proper context.

No masks outdoors: Miami-Dade County Public Schools students will no longer need to wear masks while doing outside activities for the rest of the school year, which ends in two weeks, the school district announced in a tweet on Saturday. The change in policy follows an agreement reached with the United Teachers of Dade.

Marijuana law withstands challenge: The Florida Supreme Court issued a long-awaited ruling that found Florida's regulation of the fledgling medical marijuana industry are constitutional. Florigrown, the Tampa company which was denied a license to become a medical marijuana treatment center, argued that the barriers to entry violating the 2016 constitutional amendment authorizing marijuana in Florida for medical use.

WHAT WE'RE WATCHING

AFP\_WX0BU.JPGAn Israeli holds a visual representation of the digital cryptocurrency Bitcoin, at the "Bitcoin Change" shop in the Israeli city of Tel Aviv on January 17, 2018. At the end of 2017 Israel Securities Authority said it was moving to ban trading in cryptocurrency-based companies on the Tel Aviv market until transactions involving digital coins are legally regulated. / AFP PHOTO / JACK GUEZJACK GUEZ/AFP/Getty Images

Welcome cryptophiles: This week Miami will host what may be the largest cryptocurrency conference the world has ever seen. Organizers are expecting as many as 50,000 to descend on the county for Bitcoin 2021. Headliners include Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey, legendary pro skater Tony Hawk and a cavalcade of crypto gurus. Kicking off Thursday, the event is already sold out.

Big Tech crackdown: Florida became the first state to make it harder for social media companies to punish users who spread misinformation or remove political candidates that violate their rules. Gov. Ron DeSantis signed the legislation last week which also makes it easier for Florida's attorney general and individuals to sue "big tech."

A problem with enforcement: DeSantis is attracting national attention with the new law, including the part that requires the Florida Elections Commission to impose fines of $250,000 for any platform that kicks off a candidate for violating its rules, as they did the former president. But, it turns out, the 9-member elections commission won't be able to do that. There are five vacancies on the board because the governor has failed to appoint members. By law, the elections commission is supposed to have five Republicans and four Democrats. Right now, it is comprised of three Democrats and one Republican, with four of the five empty seats belonging to the GOP.

Apparently this is not a new problem. "This administration is much, much slower in making appointments," Ed Tellechea, an assistant attorney general who provides legal advice to the elections commission, told the Sun-Sentinel. He said vacancies are also a problem with the Department of Health and boards that regulate professions.

Condoning excessive force: Video proof emerged this week that an inmate being transferred to the Charlotte Correctional Institution was repeatedly slammed onto the pavement and gang-tackled by five Department of Corrections officers while he was restrained in leg shackles and handcuffs. The leaked video obtained by the Miami Herald was reviewed by the agency's Inspector General who concluded no rules were violated. It is the latest evidence that the Florida Department of Corrections condones excessive force against inmates and appears to allow the inaccurate reporting of those incidents by prison staff. The agency never allows the footage to be seen by the public or reviewed by independent watchdogs.

Legislators speak out: In response to the report, South Florida state Sens. Jason Pizzo and Shevrin Jones joined Orlando House Rep. Dianne Hart called for structural changes and an end to abusive behavior in the state's prison system. As in most states, Florida's prison officials investigate much of their own alleged misconduct.

MIA\_104CruiseEdge00NEWPPP.JPGCelebrity Edge cruise ship blocks the view of the Miami skyline while arriving at PortMiami in the early morning on Thursday August 6, 2020.

Cruises clash: The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention gave the green light to Royal Caribbean Group to operate the first passenger cruise from Fort Lauderdale in June. But the decision is moving headlong into a conflict with the governor. The CDC recommends all cruise passengers be vaccinated, but doesn't require it. The agency has given cruise companies two options: meet vaccination thresholds of 98% of crew and 95% of passengers on the ship and start revenue cruises immediately, or forego the thresholds and first perform test cruises to ensure ***COVID*** protocols are working. The governor has signed into law legislation that prevents cruise companies from asking passengers for proof of vaccination. The law takes effect July 1.

Get vaccinated in your bathing suit: In the race to vaccinate as many Americans as possible, it has come to this: You can now get a ***COVID***-19 shot while wearing your Speedo. In an effort to boost the number of Florida residents to get the ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine***, counties have turned to enticing people by offering vaccines at sites like Heat basketball games and Memorial Day beach events.

Another reason to get vaccinated: A new study out of the University of Michigan indicates that 45% of ***COVID***-19 patients hospitalized during the first months of the pandemic experienced "significant functional decline" upon returning home. The team reviewed nearly 300 charts of adult patients from 20 to 95 years old hospitalized for ***COVID***-19 at the University of Michigan Hospital between March and April 2020. The analysis included discharge locations and therapy needs at the time of release. Patients that experienced physical loss required medical equipment such as canes, wheelchairs or shower seats, outpatient therapy, caregiver assistance and diet changes, according to the analysis. The bottom line: although new coronavirus infections, hospitalizations and deaths are on the decline, there is still much we don't know about the virus, including brain fog, kidney damage and scarred lungs and physical decline.

HurricaneRescueDogs.JPGFlorida Chief Financial Officer Jimmy Patronis, who serves as the state fire marshal, speaks during a news conference about hurricane preparedness, Wednesday, June 19, 2019, at the Miami-Dade Fire Rescue Training Facility in Miami.

Patronis won't be charged: Florida Chief Financial Officer Jimmy Patronis will not face charges for releasing an employee's sexual harassment complaint, a possible violation of state law, the Leon County state attorney's office said.

Artiles' lawyers want records sealed: Former state Sen. Frank Artiles' defense team is asking a Miami District Court judge to hold back releasing a "voluminous" amount of potential evidence -- including cellphone records, photographs, emails and other documentation -- to the public because it would interfere with Artiles' right to a fair trial and "infringe on the privacy rights of nonparties."

UM's self-inflicted wound: The University of Miami gave itself a black eye for the way it handled the removal of UM Law School Dean Anthony Varona. UM President Julio Frenk made the announcement without warning in an email on Tuesday, sparking an outcry among faculty, students, alumni and other law professionals. Although he didn't provide specific reasons for the termination, Frenk alluded to problems with fundraising, a decline in national rankings and low UM passage rates for the Florida Bar exam. By Friday, about about 60 University of Miami law school alumni sent a letter to top university administrators strongly critical of the decision and requested a meeting.

Stay well and we'd love to hear from you. Miami Herald Capitol Bureau Chief Mary Ellen Klas curates the Politics and Policy in the Sunshine State newsletter. If you have any ideas or suggestions, please drop me a note at [*meklas@miamiherald.com*](mailto:meklas@miamiherald.com)

Special offer: The Miami Herald needs your support if we are to continue to supply the meaningful local journalism you count on during these unprecedented times. We've lowered our monthly rate for unlimited digital access to $.99 a month. Check it out!

Know someone who'd like to get this newsletter? Send this to a friend to receive it weekly.

**Load-Date:** May 31, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Most older residents are vaccinated in Miami-Dade, but many meal centers still closed*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:62SM-S0S1-JC3J-X3PS-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

May 27, 2021 Thursday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** miami\_dade

**Length:** 1309 words

**Byline:**  Douglas Hanks

Miami Herald

**Body**

With shredded chicken, avocado and roasted pumpkin on a plate before her, Mafalda Peña sat down with a neighbor Tuesday to resume a daily routine declared illegal 14 months ago by Miami-Dade County's first emergency coronavirus order.

"I've missed seeing my friends," Peña said in Spanish from her table in the dining room at the Carroll Manor senior apartments in Coconut Grove. It was the dining room's first week in operation after Miami-Dade ordered all senior meal centers closed in March 2020. "I've missed asking my friends how they are doing."

Peña's late-morning lunch captured the slow reversal of ***COVID***-19's first major countywide disruption in Miami-Dade. Then-Mayor Carlos Gimenez forced senior centers to close under Order 01, which he signed March 16, 2020.

The closure order remained in place until about seven weeks ago, when the current mayor, ***Daniella Levine Cava***, lifted Gimenez's decree as part of a retirement of most county ***COVID*** rules. At the time, more than 70% of Miami-Dade's seniors had received at least one ***vaccine*** dose.

While senior comedores were allowed to reopen, most haven't. Carroll Manor is one of 15 operated by the nonprofit Little Havana Activities and Nutrition Centers, which reopened four on Monday and plans to open another four by June 14.

People familiar with the county's network of government-funded senior cafeterias and dining rooms say Little Havana is the only operator they're aware of that has resumed meal service, with most still relying on home delivery to clients under programs launched in March 2020.

"A few have opened for activities, but not meals," said Max Rothman, head of Miami-Dade's Alliance for Aging, which administers state and federal funds for senior programs and runs a helpline (305-670-4357) for finding elder-care services.

Rothman said he's ready for senior meal centers to start operating again, provided they follow county and federal ***COVID***-19 guidelines. "I think it's time," he said.

On Thursday, Miami Mayor Francis Suarez visited the Antonio Maceo senior center at the city park by the same name. It's also run by the Little Havana network. "For us to get to this moment is monumental," Suarez said.

Before the pandemic, an average of 6,500 seniors would gather daily in free cafeterias across Miami-Dade, according to Alliance for Aging statistics. Little Havana's network provided about 1,300 meals at all of its comedores on a typical day, and Miami-Dade's county centers served about 2,100 people before the ***COVID***-19 closures hit. In all, centers served 1.7 million meals been March 2019 and February 2020.

In an April memo, Levine Cava said the cafeterias overseen by the county don't plan to resume operations until June, while Miami-Dade continues spending about $2 million a week on an emergency meal-delivery program for seniors launched by Gimenez at the start of the pandemic.

"I really can't tell you why it is taking them so long," said Commissioner Joe Martinez, who has been pressing Levine Cava to reopen the centers after so many older residents had been vaccinated. "They should have been doing that a long time ago."

In the Little Havana network, the two centers at Smathers Plaza and Robert King High will remain closed for renovations.

Another three -- Council Towers South in Miami Beach, and Palermo Lakes and Stanley Axelrod UTD in Miami -- won't reopen until September based on a schedule set by the buildings' operator, Elderly Housing and Development Operations Corp., according to Little Havana operations director Betty Ruano-Bond.

When are senior centers reopening for meals?

Executives at EHDOC weren't available for comment Thursday. Raquel Regalado, the county commissioner whose district includes the Stanley Axelrod tower, said she was discouraged at the lack of urgency in reopening senior centers.

"At this point, people have just gotten used to this and it's a lot easier to deal with seniors this way" by relying on meal delivery and keeping facilities closed, Regalado said. "But it's not good for their mental health. We need these senior centers to reopen."

Miami-Dade reopened eight of its 19 senior centers for limited activities, but none serve meals, said Annika Holder, director of the county's Community Action and Human Services Department. "At this time, all meals are provided via weekly home delivery," she said.

For the last 14 months, food-delivery firms under contract with Miami-Dade delivered nearly 24 million meals to seniors in the county who requested the service after the pandemic began.

New enrollments for the historic nutrition effort ended in July, and the county expects the Federal Emergency Management Agency to cover nearly 90% of the costs -- which recently topped $215 million.

How long will senior meal delivery last in Miami-Dade?

Miami-Dade is using federal ***COVID***-19 relief dollars and Meals on Wheels funding to cover the rest.

While well off the peak of 98,000 meals a day hit in May 2020, vendors are still delivering nearly 42,000 meals each day at a cost of about $320,000 every 24 hours, according to Community Action data.

"It was important to keep seniors safe," Gimenez, now a Republican member of Congress, said this week in a text message. "Glad they are reopening, but sad it took over a year to do it."

MIA\_SENIORCAFETERIAREOPENS-(2)Dining room coordinator Barbara Hernandez, right, serves meals to residents of Carroll Manor Senior Center on May 25, 2021. This is the first week of senior centers reopening their cafeterias. Many senior centers have not opened, but the Little Havana Activities and Nutrition Centers has reopened four, including Carroll Manor, and plans to open four more by June 14.

When Gimenez ordered senior meal centers to close in March 2020, Little Havana shifted its government food dollars to frozen meals for its own delivery program.

Before reopening centers, staff asked clients if they wanted to stick with home meals or return to in-person dining at the cafeterias.

Once a Little Havana senior signs up for the dining-room program, their home meals would stop. At Carroll Manor, 101 clients were receiving home meals. Of those, 100 said they wanted to start eating at the cafeteria, Ruano-Bond said.

"They have been isolated for way too long," she said Tuesday as the Carroll Manor dining room filled up before 11:30 a.m. "They need this. We have a lot of people who don't come for the meal -- they come to socialize."

She said 97% of Little Havana's Carroll Manor clients have been vaccinated. In the dining room Tuesday at lunchtime, masks were optional, the domino table available and all seating was open.

MIA\_SENIORCAFETERIAREOPENS-From left, Gregoria Reyes, 100, talks to Esther Ayllon, 88, in the dining room at Carroll Manor Senior Center in Miami on May 25, 2021. This is the first week of some senior centers reopening their cafeterias.From left, Gregoria Reyes, 100, talks to Esther Ayllon, 88, in the dining room at Carroll Manor Senior Center in Miami on May 25, 2021. This is the first week of senior centers reopening their cafeterias. Many senior centers have not yet opened, but the Little Havana Activities and Nutrition Centers has reopened four, including Carroll Manor, and plans to open four more by June 14.

Peña, who declined to give her age, and her lunch companion, Luz Albarracin, 70, both were vaccinated in February, they said. Tuesday's lunch was their second meal with neighbors since the pandemic began, though Bingo Night returned about two weeks ago.

"We need the socializing," Albarracin said in Spanish. "It's therapy for us."

Gregoria Reyes, 100, said she declined Little Havana's frozen-meal delivery during the pandemic. Seated at a Carroll Manor table with a neighbor, Reyes said she's thrilled to have the dining room open again.

"The meals are delicious," she said in Spanish. "And now I don't have to cook or clean."

**Load-Date:** May 28, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*CDC says you can ditch your mask. Not so fast, Florida. What do the rules mean for you?*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:62NW-4JM1-JC3J-X33B-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

May 14, 2021 Friday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** coronavirus

**Length:** 1707 words

**Byline:**  Howard Cohen

Miami Herald

**Body**

So the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention issued new recommendations that people who are fully vaccinated against ***COVID***-19 "can participate in indoor and outdoor activities, large or small, without wearing a ***mask*** or physical distancing."

That's what CDC Director Dr. Rochelle Walensky said Thursday, citing the effectiveness of the vaccines used against the novel coronavirus and improvements in daily numbers of cases, deaths and hospitalizations.

President Biden responded in kind at a White House briefing. Hours after Biden's administration said that fully vaccinated people are largely -- but not totally -- free to go maskless, Miami-Dade's mayor declared an end to mandatory masks at county buildings.

Cava video msg

"We have nearly weathered this once-in-a century crisis. ... This is truly the day we have been waiting for," Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** said in a video message Thursday night. "And I feel more confident than ever that we are reaching the light at the end of a very dark tunnel."

So, to all those who waited in lines, worked your computers to get an appointment the way Stevie Wonder works a keyboard and took the single dose Johnson & Johnson or the two-dose Pfizer or Moderna and waited two weeks afterward to be considered fully vaccinated: Toss that ***mask*** in the trash and wave your hands in the air like you just don't care.

Right?

Not so fast.

Is it really safe to ditch masks if fully vaccinated? Experts split on new CDC guidance

You've got questions. We've got some answers.

Do you have to wear a ***mask*** when traveling?

Yes. The new CDC guidelines say that masks are still required when traveling in any public conveyance. This means keep the ***mask*** on regardless of vaccination status while traveling on planes, buses and trains.

What about Metrorail and Metromover?

Yes. Those are public transportation systems. Mayor Levine Cava did not tell you to ditch the masks there.

What about Miami International Airport or Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport?

FLL airport

You're flying. You're masking. Same thing inside the airports, the concourses and airport stores and eateries. Those are public transportation places.

A Transportation Security Administration's federal ***mask*** mandate remains in effect through September for planes, trains and buses, USA Today reports.

I want to visit Mom at the nursing home. ***Mask***?

Yes. She still can't see your beautiful face just yet. The CDC still recommends the wearing of masks inside healthcare settings.

Does this apply at hospitals? Your doctor's office?

Yes. Healthcare setting.

I'm visiting an inmate at a South Florida correctional facility. ***Mask*** on? ***Mask*** off?

***Mask*** on. The CDC kept the recommendation in place for all correctional facilities.

Going to the library. To ***mask*** or not?

In Levine Cava's message Thursday, she said that masks will no longer be required at county buildings. A library is part of the county system. That said, she's "still recommending people wear a ***mask*** and social distance at Miami-Dade County facilities."

What about schools?

Carvalho tweet

Thursday's about-face is giving South Florida school leaders a new assignment.

At a news conference alongside Levine Cava, Miami-Dade County Public Schools Superintendent Alberto Carvalho said he, too, was to convene and talk with the mayor's medical advisor, Dr. Peter Paige, as well as with the school's Public Health and Medical Experts Task Force. That body is made up of medical experts at institutions including Florida International University and University of Miami, he told WSVN, adding that schools could see changes as early as the summer session.

"The protocols may be different, but we find it important to first consult with our medical experts," he said at the briefing. "We hope to have a decision regarding the use of masks in our facilities very soon."

I'm going to the store. Do I need to wear a ***mask*** and avoid the customer next to me in the aisle?

This is where it gets confusing. The Miami-Dade mayor alluded to the confusion when she urged caution.

"In consultation with our Chief Medical Officer Dr. Peter Paige and our panel of medical experts I am no long mandating but still recommending that you wear a ***mask*** and social distance at Miami-Dade facilities," she said. "About 50% of our 16-plus have been vaccinated but since we don't know who has or who hasn't been vaccinated we urge that you practice common sense and continue following masking and other precautions if you are not vaccinated."

What about Publix?

Publix eases ***mask*** mandates for vaccinated workers and shoppers

Publix frontPublix announced that it will no longer require fully vaccinated shoppers and workers to wear facial coverings starting May 15, 2021.

Fully vaccinated shoppers and workers will no longer have to wear masks inside Publix supermarkets starting Saturday, May 15.

The Publix announcement said "those who are not fully vaccinated are required to use face coverings over their noses and mouths while inside any Publix store."

Masks would also be required in stores located in states or local municipalities that require them.

The announcement, released by spokeswoman Maria Brous, did not say if proof of vaccination is required to enter Publix supermarkets or if customers would be asked their status.

What about Winn-Dixie, Fresco y Más?

winn dixie tt.jpgWinn Dixie pharmacies will be administering the ***vaccine*** as part of the federal ***vaccine*** program with ever-changing eligibility requirements.

Southeastern Grocers announced that its Winn-Dixie and Fresco y Más stores won't require fully vaccinated customers and employees to wear masks as of May 15. (The retailer also owns Harveys Supermarket, which has several stores in Jacksonville.) Non-vaccinated people are still required to ***mask*** up, but Southeastern is relying on the "honor system" where that is concerned, CBS4 reported..

What about Aldi?

One of Publix's competitors, Aldi, was still requiring face masks inside its stores.

Miami flash briefing player embed

What about Walmart, Costco and Trader Joe's?

Walmart, Costco and Trader Joe's are dropping ***mask*** requirement for vaccinated people

People who are fully vaccinated will no longer be required to wear face masks at Walmart, Costco and Trader Joe's.

What about Target?

Customers and employees who are fully vaccinated will no longer need to wear a ***mask*** at Target, according to McClatchy News. The retail chain on Friday initially announced Friday that it was keeping its ***mask*** requirements but then updated its policies Monday, May 17.

It is encouraging anyone who has not been fully vaccinated to continue wearing masks.

What about pharmacies like CVS and Walgreens?

CVS said in a statement to McClatchy News it is evaluating its in-store ***mask*** policy but currently still requires face masks.

"The safety of our employees and customers will continue to guide our decision-making process," a CVS spokesperson said.

Similarly, because Walgreen's is a ***COVID***-19 vaccination and testing center, it is keeping its ***mask*** policies in place "for the time being," a spokesperson told McClatchy News.

"The safety of our team members and customers is our top priority and will continue to guide our decision process."

I miss sitting at Starbucks. Can I do it ***mask*** free?

publix\_starbucksStarbucks will begin delivering its coffee in South Florida through UberEATS.

You can sit inside a Starbucks without facial covering if you're fully vaccinated, the company announced, setting Monday, May 17, as the date the new ***COVID*** policy goes into effect. Local regulations still apply.

Some store appearances may not change quite yet. "As we continue to ensure the health and well-being of our partners and customers, our restrooms generally remain temporarily closed to the public in stores where the café or café seating is unavailable."

What about Disney, Universal and SeaWorld?

TRAVEL-UST-SEAWORLD-ORLANDO-6-OSSea World Orlando president Kyle Miller, left, talks to invited guests during a media preview on Wednesday, June 10, 2020, ahead of the formal reopening to guests on Thursday. The Orlando, Fla., park has been closed since March 16 due to the coronavirus pandemic. (Joe Burbank/Orlando Sentinel/TNS)

Taking a vacation to your favorite theme park in Orlando? Walt Disney World, Universal and SeaWorld all dropped their outdoors ***mask*** rules, The Orlando Sentinel reported.

But you have to keep your masks on when indoors and on transportation at the parks.

But some private businesses may have relaxed the rules. Can they?

"To private businesses, continue to make your own decisions on how best to keep your workers and your customers safe," Levine Cava said Thursday.

The Broward Center for the Performing Arts, for example, has started offering live entertainment again on its stages, albeit with modifications. "For shows taking place currently at our theaters, seating capacity is approximately 30% of normal capacity to allow for physical distancing," said Kelley Shanley, Broward Center's president and CEO. "Facial coverings are required unless patrons are consuming food or beverages in a designated seating area."

Fred Astaire Dance Studios, which has a Coral Gables location, sent an email to its patrons on May 14 to tell of its new policy.

The studio's statement read: "Hello lovely students, in regards to ***mask*** mandates, we have been doing everything in our power to follow CDC guidelines. Being that the ***mask*** mandate has been lifted for those who are vaccinated, we understand everyone's comfort level is different in response to ***mask***-free contact. Please know that we will work to accommodate meeting your comfort level. Moving forward, if you would prefer that your instructor wear a ***mask***, we are happy to do so, please let us know in advance of your dance session."

So some places are. Others not. We feel your frustration as the pathway to (a new) normalcy evolves.

"We're creating a situation where private companies or individuals are responsible for their business and finding out if people are vaccinated -- if they're even going to be enforcing that," Rachael Piltch-Loeb, associate research scientist at New York University School of Global Public Health, told USA Today.

This article will be updated as new information becomes available.

Miami Herald staff writer Michelle Marchante contributed to this report.

**Load-Date:** May 17, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Masks are no longer required at Miami-Dade libraries. Still mandatory on Metrorail*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:62NN-5961-JC3J-X0CM-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

May 13, 2021 Thursday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** coronavirus

**Length:** 286 words

**Byline:**  Douglas Hanks

Miami Herald

**Body**

Hours after President Biden's administration declared vaccinated people largely free to go maskless, Miami-Dade's mayor declared an end to mandatory masks at county buildings.

"This is truly the day we have been waiting for," Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** said in a video message Thursday night. "And I feel more confident than ever that we are reaching the the light at the end of a very dark tunnel."

Gov. Ron DeSantis had already swept away most of Miami-Dade's ***mask*** mandates two weeks ago with a statewide decree ending local ***COVID***-19 restrictions. Levine Cava, a Democrat, faulted the Republican governor's May 3 order at the time, and said "pretending" the pandemic was over "won't make it go away." She then used her power as the county's top administrator to declare ***mask*** rules would still be in place for county buildings, including libraries.

Do you still have to wear a ***mask*** at MIA?

In her message Thursday, she reversed that rule and said masks aren't required at county buildings. But she said she's "still recommending people wear a ***mask*** and social distance at Miami-Dade County facilities."

Masks remain required on the county bus system, Metrorail and Metromover, because of rules mandated by a federal order regarding mass transit vehicles. Masks are also still required at county-owned Miami International Airport, due to a federal order applying to airports across the country.

On Thursday, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention made a major revision of its guidance on ***COVID***-19 safeguards for people who are fully vaccinated. The guidelines now say the fully vaccinated can resume pre-pandemic activities without wearing a ***mask*** or social distancing unless required by local laws or business rules.

**Load-Date:** May 14, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*A COVID vaccine during your next visit to Dolphin Mall? Here's how to get your shot*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:62N0-KKG1-DYJM-M4H2-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

May 10, 2021 Monday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** coronavirus

**Length:** 207 words

**Byline:**  Michelle Marchante

Miami Herald

**Body**

If you're at Dolphin Mall to shop and eat, you can now get a shot, too.

A new vaccination site opened Monday at the Sweetwater mall, 11401 NW 12th St., in the valet area near Cheesecake Factory. First- and second-dose Pfizer shots will be available daily at the site from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.

It's part of Miami-Dade County's efforts to expand inoculation access. Vaccination sites also opened Monday at Miami International Airport and PortMiami.

"We're taking vaccines where the people are -- to the port, airport, hotels, malls, restaurants, schools, and businesses across our community," Miami-Dade County Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** said in a statement.

While the vaccination site is officially a drive-thru, people who are dropped off by a rideshare or hanging out in the mall can walk over to get a shot, said Miami-Dade County spokeswoman Rachel Johnson.

Remember, Pfizer is for people 16 and older. Anyone who lives or works in Florida can get a shot. Proof of age will be required. Teens 16 and 17 years old will also need a parent or legal guardian with them at the vaccination to sign a consent form.

Appointments are not required though they are encouraged. To make a vaccination appointment, visit miamidade.gov/***vaccine*** or call 305-614-2014.

**Load-Date:** May 11, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Miami-Dade's vaccination pace still slowing. Would pizza and a shot help?*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:62MB-NYC1-JC3J-X2BN-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

May 7, 2021 Friday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** miami\_dade

**Length:** 1097 words

**Byline:**  Douglas Hanks and Daniel Chang

Miami Herald

**Body**

With ***COVID***-19 vaccines plentiful but vaccinations slowing, Miami-Dade County's government has gone hunting for young people procrastinating on taking a shot.

Perhaps a shot of another kind would help.

The county's recent launch of pop-up vaccination sites heads to Wynwood this weekend, with a promotion by the restaurant Gramps. Miami-Dade plans a Pfizer vaccination station next door to the restaurant on Saturday and Sunday, and Gramps will sweeten the offer with a free cocktail and slice of pizza for the newly inoculated.

"We're at a place where we need to be nimble and creative," said Rachel Johnson, communications director for Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava***.

MIA\_SN1\_6757Monica Diaz, 57, an employee at Royal Caribbean, registers to get a ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** at a county pop-up vaccination site at PortMiami Terminal A on Wednesday, April 28, 2021.

As hospital admissions for ***COVID***-19 rise among working-age Floridians between the ages of 30 and 50, Miami-Dade officials are ramping up efforts to vaccinate young workers in the industries that make the local economy hum, such as travel and hospitality. But they will need a fresh approach.

Now that nearly one-third of Miami-Dade adults have been fully vaccinated against ***COVID***-19, public health experts say it's time to move into the next phase of the inoculation campaign -- away from mass vaccination sites and towards efforts that bring vaccines to people where they live and work.

When is the Gramps vaccination pop-up?

Miami Beach recently set up a vaccination site on the sands of South Beach. On Monday, the Miami Beach Chamber of Commerce is launching a ***vaccine*** incentive program offering coupons for free drinks and retail and restaurant discounts to anyone who gets vaccinated at a state-run vaccination site across from City Hall.

In Wynwood, the Gramps vaccination promotion (from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday and Sunday at 176 NW 24th St.) is the first county site aimed at a popular entertainment destination.

Miami-Dade launched its effort April 28 with a drive-up vaccination site at PortMiami, followed by a vaccination area inside Miami International Airport.

The local change in approach reflects a national trend of waning demand for the ***vaccine*** as the country has surpassed 250 million administered doses, including 16 million in Florida, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. In South Florida, hospitals that just a few months ago saw appointment slots fill up within minutes of announcing them will soon stop providing vaccines.

The latest data from Florida shows that Miami-Dade is vaccinating people at a much slower pace than it was a month ago. Across Miami-Dade, about 21,000 doses were being administered on an average day this week, compared to 24,000 at the start of April. The peak was nearly 32,000 daily doses on April 12.

MIA\_SN1\_6648A healthcare worker registers a patient waiting to receive a ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** at a county pop-up vaccination site at PortMiami Terminal A on Wednesday, April 28, 2021.

In Miami-Dade, more than 868,000 people have been fully vaccinated as of May 6, the CDC and Florida's health department reported.

Still, in some neighborhoods residents haven't been showing up for appointments or taking advantage of first-come-first-served sites. Those individuals may be harder to reach because they don't have internet access to make an online appointment, lack transportation to get to a vaccination site or are working during the hours when shots are administered.

Miami-Dade vaccination outreach

To reach them, county officials are reallocating shots and developing new strategies. Miami-Dade has launched so-called VACS Now teams of outreach workers who target neighborhoods with low vaccination rates. The county has also provided donated Uber rides to county vaccination sites, scheduled appointments for house visits and taken out advertisements in Haitian Creole media.

The county vaccination site at Gramps this weekend is free, and appointments aren't required. Johnson said Miami-Dade is also exploring pop-ups at malls, transit stations and near hotels and other businesses with large numbers of employees.

"If they can't come to you," said Eneida Roldan, a physician and chief executive of Florida International University's healthcare service network, "you go to them."

MIA\_SN1\_6848Andrew Garcia, an employee at Royal Caribbean, gets a shot of a ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** at a county pop-up vaccination site at PortMiami Terminal A on Wednesday, April 28, 2021.

Roldan leads the campaign to vaccinate FIU's 55,000 students, in addition to faculty, staff and, in some cases, members of their immediate households.

FIU started vaccinating people in February, she said, and has provided more than 10,000 doses through April. Roldan said FIU recently ramped up outreach with webinars featuring medical experts. The university, she said, also sends emails to students and staff with links to a website where they can sign up for a shot on campus.

Roldan, who is a past CEO of Miami-Dade's public hospital, Jackson Health System, said public health officials need to amplify their message and communicate "in layman's terms" the science and the shared goal behind the effort.

"This is not going to end anytime soon if we do not have the collaboration and the personal responsibility," she said, "with collective action in mind that we all are in this together and that we all have to do our part."

Mass vaccination efforts giving way to pop-ups

Now that demand for the ***vaccine*** has slowed and public health officials appear to have more supply available than arms to jab, the campaign needs to change direction: away from mass efforts and toward individuals who are harder to reach, said Michael Osterholm, an epidemiologist and former adviser to President Joe Biden's ***COVID***-19 task force.

"We have to concentrate right now on the last mile, meaning we need to get the ***vaccine*** to the community where it will be used," said Osterholm, who is director of the Center for Infectious Disease Research and Policy at the University of Minnesota. "We're having to pivot to determine in our communities, who isn't getting vaccinated."

Public health officials will not reduce transmission of ***COVID***-19, he said, until the ***vaccine*** reaches large segments of the population across "all risk areas -- age, gender, race and ethnicity, socioeconomic status," he said.

"We have to meet people where they're at," he added. "Different messages with different information for different people who have challenges with the ***vaccine***."

Miami Herald staff writer Martin Vassolo contributed to this report.

**Load-Date:** May 7, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Florida Gov. DeSantis' politics-over-health approach is bad for business recovery | Opinion*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:62KS-RHF1-JC3J-X2DY-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

May 5, 2021 Wednesday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** fabiola\_santiago

**Length:** 957 words

**Byline:**  Fabiola Santiago

Miami Herald

**Body**

Ron's gone wrong again.

Blindsiding local officials -- most egregiously, in the ***COVID***-19 epicenter of Miami -- Gov. Ron DeSantis declared Florida fully opened on Monday.

Without enough Floridians vaccinated and virus mutations a new concern, issuing a sweeping executive order that overrides local restrictions was a highly irresponsible move. It sends false free-for-all signals at a time when the governor's message to the public should clearly be first and foremost: Please, vaccinate.

***Vaccine*** hesitancy

***Vaccine*** hesitancy is all too real, thanks in large measure, to politicians like DeSantis, who have downplayed the virus since the beginning, giving wings to debunked mythology and conspiracy theories over science.

The way to a real safe new normal depends on whether enough Floridians vaccinate.

Yet, only 27 percent of the population is fully vaccinated and only 42 percent has received one dose as of this writing. Experts estimate 80 percent to 90 percent of the population has to be vaccinated to reach ***COVID***-19 immunity.

So, no, we're not in a place where we can throw caution to the wind, ***vaccine***-wise. Nor are we free and clear to abandon ***mask***-wearing and social distancing when cases of infection by coronavirus variants more than doubled in Florida during the past two weeks.

"This pandemic is real and it's still a present danger to our public health," Miami-Dade Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** tweeted after the DeSantis announcement. "Pretending it's over won't make it go away. Lifting orders won't make it go away."

She added: "What will: Getting vaccinated."

Miami-Dade Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** on DeSantis open Florida order

A recent study by the University of Miami published in the American Journal of Emergency Medicine confirms the correlation between stringent public safety measures against ***COVID***-19 and lower cases of deaths in Florida and Miami-Dade County during the first two months of the pandemic.

Once restrictions were loosened, researchers note, there was a surge in transmission between the Memorial Day and Independence Day holidays. When statewide restrictions reached their lowest enforcement during October, a second surge in coronavirus cases was seen immediately after.

That's the science, not the lip service DeSantis gives ***COVID***-19 to justify his premature, politically motivated decisions.

But what else can Floridians expect from DeSantis?

He has waged a political culture war over the highly contagious and deadly disease since the pandemic reached our shores. And now, he's endangering not only Floridians' health, but also threatening, with his haste, business recovery.

He contradicts himself with this new edict, when in the same breath, he signs a bill banning businesses from asking for proof of vaccination, the so-called "anti-***vaccine*** passport" law.

The CEO of Norwegian Cruise Line Holdings said Thursday that if Florida won't allow operators to require proof of ***COVID***-19 vaccination for passengers and crew, he will take NCL ships elsewhere.

Cruise liners were counting on asking people for proof of vaccination to ensure a safe return to cruising. Now they can't do that -- and guess what? A substantial number of people aren't going to patronize businesses that put their health at risk.

Certainly not when 41 percent of Republicans say they aren't getting the ***vaccine***, according to a PBS NewsHour/NPR/Marist poll. They are DeSantis' base, and he should be doing the hard work of persuading them, not dissuading them by giving them a free pass to contaminate others.

Florida needs -- has always needed -- a public-education campaign, but it hasn't gotten one from its top leader.

It's too early for ***mask*** burning, Florida. A new 'double mutant' ***COVID*** variant is looming | Opinion

Business leaders, step up

The state needs business leaders to step up and, if only for their own survival, publicly encourage people to vaccinate. They must reach their hesitant populations, and workplaces must provide incentives like time off or a bonus to vaccinate.

If Target, for example, gives customers a $5 gift card when they get the flu ***vaccine*** at store pharmacies, why don't ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** providers like Publix do so as well? And also CVS and Walgreens, which have wasted more ***COVID vaccine*** doses than most states combined?

It's a crime to see empty seats at these vaccination sites, no lines when the rest of the world is in need.

But that's what happens when a governor plays to political division instead of facts.

Late responding to the pandemic, which DeSantis downplayed, the governor plays blind man to the horrors that families sickened by ***COVID*** have endured, then calls his latest move "evidence-based." And he does so to the rousing applause of Republican legislators and the lieutenant governor from Miami flanking him, acquiescent despite the losses of her people.

Let's see that evidence.

DeSantis doesn't show it because: First, he doesn't have it; second, it doesn't swing in his favor, so he hides it from the public and won't discuss it with journalists, whose questions he won't answer.

And, what he does say, is deeply flawed.

He touts a ***COVID*** mortality rate of 2 percent, as if that's some kind of a success measure when the death toll is a horrific 35,399 in Florida -- and counting.

Deaths have slowed, but they're still happening.

Just ask the family of a beloved school worker who died of ***COVID***-19 infection in Jacksonville last weekend. The school is shut down for two weeks of quarantine.

Maskless during mass political rallies he allowed during the worst of the infection, DeSantis is impetuous and premature during economic recovery.

His politics-over-health approach is bad for business.

DeSantis declares victory on pandemic, telling cities still fighting ***COVID***-19, 'Tough luck' | Editorial

**Load-Date:** May 7, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Miami International Airport offering COVID-19 vaccines to Florida passengers, employees*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:62KP-SBT1-DYJM-M0JT-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

May 4, 2021 Tuesday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** coronavirus

**Length:** 326 words

**Byline:**  Michelle Marchante

Miami Herald

**Body**

Starting Monday, anyone who lives or works in Florida will be able to receive a ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** while waiting for their next flight at Miami International Airport. So can airport employees, their family and friends.

First-dose Pfizer vaccinations will be available from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday, May 10, through Friday, May 14, at two different locations in the airport:

Concourse D (American Airlines area), 4th Floor Auditorium, upstairs from Door 1, which is visible from the curbside area., and is pre-security.

75 Bus Road (MIA taxi overflow lot). This is a drive-thru location.

Second doses will be available at the same locations on June 1 to June 4 and on June 7 from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Remember, Pfizer's ***vaccine*** is for people 16 and older and requires two shots, 21 days apart. Teens 16 and 17 years old will need to have a parent or legal guardian with them at the vaccination to sign a consent form and confirm their age. You will be asked if you live or work in Florida. If you say yes, you can get a shot.

MIA tweet

"We are committed to making it as easy and convenient as possible for those who live and work in Miami-Dade to get vaccinated, which is why I am so excited that we will soon be vaccinating at MIA, the daily workplace for more than 36,000 of our travel industry employees," Miami-Dade County Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** said in a news release. "Vaccination is our single best tool to beat this pandemic and truly get our community and our economy back to normal."

Appointments are not required -- which means you can just show up and wait in line. To preregister for a shot, visit miamidade.gov/***vaccine*** or call 305-614-2014. For TTY, call 711 (Florida Relay Service) or email [*311@miamidade.gov*](mailto:311@miamidade.gov) for assistance.

If you don't want to or are unable to get your second dose at the airport, don't worry. There are several South Florida locations that will administer second dose Pfizer shots, even if you received your first shot elsewhere.

**Load-Date:** May 11, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Stripped of mandates, Miami-Dade urging 'common sense' when it comes to mask wearing*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:62KH-FPB1-DYJM-M4GH-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

May 3, 2021 Monday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** miami\_dade

**Length:** 690 words

**Byline:**  Douglas Hanks, Aaron Leibowitz and Martin Vassolo

Miami Herald

**Body**

Miami-Dade County had a ***mask*** rule in place for nearly 400 days before Gov. Ron DeSantis on Monday issued his most sweeping decree yet, suspending every emergency ***COVID***-19 order issued by municipal leaders across Florida.

The decision left local mayors denouncing the move, and telegraphing the next phase of Miami-Dade's ***COVID***-19 economy: governments left to encourage businesses to keep requiring masks and residents to keep wearing them in hopes a vaccination effort will ease the threat later in the year.

"I urge our community to continue using common sense to prevent the spread of the virus and most importantly, to get vaccinated -- our best and only path forward to truly put the pandemic behind us," Miami-Dade Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** said in a statement that said she was "deeply concerned" about the DeSantis order. "And I urge the Governor to commit resources to helping to educate and persuade Floridians to get vaccinated."

Masks in Miami-Dade County first became mandated by emergency order at 6 p.m. on April 6, 2020, under a decree signed by then-Mayor Carlos Gimenez and later ratified unanimously by the county commission.

Enforcement began to taper off the first time DeSantis intervened in local ***COVID***-19 rules. In September, he barred local governments from collecting fines connected to ***COVID***-19 violations against individuals. In March, he canceled the fines altogether. The result was a countywide ***mask*** order that was in place but largely unenforced. Miami-Dade's Clerk of the Courts reported Monday no ***COVID***-19 citations were issued countywide over the weekend.

"He pretty much took the teeth out of the cities and the counties when he said no citations," said Carlos Hernandez, the Republican mayor of Hialeah and a frequent critic of DeSantis' ***COVID*** response "Really, this is nothing new."

Miami-Dade had already lifted most of its ***COVID***-19 rules by the time the DeSantis order was announced on Monday. On April 6, Levine Cava ended dozens of detailed restrictions on businesses in favor of a consolidated order.

It continued most of the masking requirements and capacity caps for restaurants. The DeSantis order targets those directives, declaring them suspended.

DeSantis wrote in his latest order that he wanted Florida to "return day-to-day life back to normal." In Miami Beach, Mayor Dan Gelber said in an interview that the families of those who continue dying or being hospitalized due to ***COVID***-19 likely don't think the pandemic is "over."

"He needs to stop following ideology and instead start following science," Gelber said. "He's obviously intent on opening up our economy with as much peril as humanly possible."

The city had not announced changes to its emergency measures as of Monday afternoon, but Gelber believed the order would likely strip the city's power to close down businesses for a lack of ***mask*** usage among customers or employees.

Even as Miami-Dade backed off ***COVID*** rules in the private sector, strict restrictions remained when it came to government meetings. Some chambers are closed entirely to the public.

In Miami-Dade, Commission Chairman Jose "Pepe" Diaz reserves seats in the chambers for county employees and restricts members of the public to entering only when speaking on an agenda item.

A spokesperson, Olga Vega, said no decision has been made for Tuesday's meeting. "The chairman is waiting to see the governor's executive orders," she said.

In Miami, Mayor Francis Suarez issued a statement that emphasized the city getting back to normal. "The City of Miami will abide by the Governor's order as we continue to work toward a full reopening of our city," he said.

Robert Finvarb, whose company owns Marriott hotels in the Miami area, praised the DeSantis order as allowing businesses to make informed decisions on what's best for employees and customers. Even so, Finvarb said no rules would change at his properties.

"We'll still operate in an abundance of caution," he said. "Many of our visitors are not from the state of Florida, so they may have different expectations about what's a safe environment."

Miami Herald staff writer Joey Flechas contributed to this report.

**Load-Date:** May 4, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*DeSantis declares COVID 'state of emergency' over, overrides local restrictions*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:62KC-FGH1-JC3J-X54T-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

May 3, 2021 Monday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** state\_politics

**Length:** 2061 words

**Byline:**  Mary Ellen Klas

Miami Herald

**Body**

Declaring Florida's ***COVID***-19 emergency over, Gov. Ron DeSantis on Monday signed an executive order invalidating all remaining local emergency ***COVID*** orders and signed a bill into law that bars businesses, schools and government entities across Florida from asking anyone to provide proof of a ***COVID***-19 vaccination.

"I think it's the evidence-based thing to do,'' DeSantis said at a St. Petersburg restaurant where he signed the bill with House Speaker Chris Sprowls and Senate President Wilton Simpson at his side. "I think folks that are saying that they need to be policing people at this point, if you're saying that, you really are saying you don't believe in the vaccines, you don't believe in the data, you don't believe in the science. ... We are no longer in the state of emergency."

The provision regulating so-called "***vaccine*** passports" is tucked into SB 2006, a bill intended to update the state's emergency powers in the face of a future public health emergency. The new law is effective July 1, but DeSantis also on Monday said he would sign an executive order invalidating all remaining local emergency ***COVID*** orders that are still in place after July 1 and suspend immediately any orders related to ***COVID***-19 now.

The measure would make it more difficult for local governments to respond to public emergencies by requiring any future emergency orders to be narrowly tailored and extended only in seven-day increments for a total of 42 days and gives the governor the authority to invalidate an emergency order. Currently, such orders can be extended indefinitely.

Under the new law, businesses, schools and governments may not require proof of vaccinations, and if they do, they can be fined up to $5,000 per incident. They may, however, institute screening protocols if it is "consistent with authoritative or controlling government-issued guidance to protect public health."

Licensed healthcare providers are the only entities exempted from the ***vaccine*** documentation provision.

Private companies can continue to require people to wear masks, but governments cannot mandate it, under the law.

On Sunday, Florida registered 3,841 new ***COVID***-19 cases, 31 deaths and 6.3 million fully vaccinated people, about 30% of the population. Florida ranks 38th in ***vaccine*** rates in the nation.

The governor defended his decision to suspend local emergency orders relating to masks and social distancing.

"If we have widespread vaccinations that are over 99% effective, what's the evidence basis for somebody to wear a ***mask*** now?'' he asked.

Also Monday, the governor ordered that the state Capitol, which had been closed to the public since March of last year even as he ordered the rest of the state to be open for business, will reopen to the public on Friday.

Local government officials immediately criticized the governor's decision.

Push back from the mayors

In Miami-Dade County, Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** said a lifting of local ***COVID*** rules would ignore the dangers that remain to public safety.

"We are still in an emergency," Levine Cava, a Democrat in a nonpartisan office, said after a press conference on youth sports. "We have fewer than half of our people vaccinated. We have new variants threatening us."

Miami Beach Mayor Dan Gelber said he expects the order to suspend the city's ability to shut down businesses when customers or employees don't wear masks -- just as popular Beach night spots like LIV and Mango's Tropical Cafe have begun welcoming back crowds.

The city's ***mask*** mandate, which borrows from a Miami-Dade County emergency order, empowers Code Compliance officers to close a business for 24 hours if the officer observes customers or staff not wearing masks at the business.

"The governor seems to be doing everything he can to convince people not to wear masks," Gelber said Monday.

DeSantis' executive order.pdf

Broward County still has a detailed order in place that requires facial coverings to be worn in indoor public places and establishes social distancing rules for businesses, and County Mayor Steve Geller said Monday he was "extremely unhappy" with the governor's decision.

"But we will follow the orders of the governor because he is the governor," Geller told the Miami Herald. "The governor's order essentially is stating that the ***COVID*** crisis is over in the state of Florida. Under no objective set of criteria are we safe yet."

Levine Cava has already lifted most of the ***COVID*** rules imposed by her predecessor, Carlos Gimenez, in 2020. Early last month, she consolidated the Gimenez rules into one emergency order that mostly mandates masks in many interior spaces and outdoors if people are within 10 feet of each other. Restaurants still face restrictions on capacity and requirements to keep tables spaced apart.

Reports from the county clerk's office show local police and code enforcers in Miami-Dade largely stopped issuing citations for ***COVID*** violations after DeSantis halted the collection of fines against individuals last fall. The report from the last weekend showed zero citations issued to individuals or businesses.

"Our hands have been tied in so many ways," Levine Cava said.

Appearing before the Miami Herald Editorial Board after the press conference, Levine Cava said the county would continue promoting the importance of wearing masks and said she hoped DeSantis would send state help to speed vaccinations if he forces the county to stop mandating safety rules.

"We're not keeping up with the national success rate," she said. "We really must have an all-hands-on-deck" approach.

Miami flash briefing player embed

What it means locally

In Miami Beach, other emergency measures that may be impacted by the governor's order include the closure of Ocean Drive to vehicles, a citywide restriction on retail alcohol sales past 10 p.m. and the closure of Monument Island.

Gelber, who has butted heads with DeSantis over his curtailing of local emergency powers, said ***mask*** usage is still needed because there continue to be ***COVID*** hospitalizations and deaths in Miami-Dade County.

"It feels a little bit like the governor is spiking the ball at the 10-yard line," he said. "Obviously the virus is still with us. And local governments ought to be able to require indoor ***mask*** usage when appropriate."

Broward officials said last month that they didn't plan to loosen their rules until at least 50% of adults in the county had received at least one ***vaccine*** shot -- that figure is currently around 43%, a milestone the county says it achieved Monday for residents over 16 years old -- and until either the five-day rolling average test positivity rate dips below 5% for a week or the rate of new daily cases drops below 15 per 100,000 people.

The county's positivity rate has remained slightly above 5% with about 29 cases per day per 100,000 people.

The new law comes just days after the CDC told the cruise ship industry it can speed up the timeline for cruises to restart -- but only if ships can show most passengers and crew are vaccinated against ***COVID***-19.

"The legislation creates a default legal presumption that during any emergency our businesses should be free from government mandates to close, and our schools should remain open for in-person instruction for our children,'' DeSantis said, commending his decision to open the state despite warnings from federal healthcare officials. "We wanted people to be happy living in Florida. It was the road less traveled at the time."

Critics said the ban on ***vaccine*** documentation was written to appeal to ***vaccine*** opponents and would hamper efforts by the cruise industry and others that have struggled to bring tourists back to Florida.

DeSantis on April 2 issued an executive order blocking ***COVID***-19 passports, which he said would create "huge" privacy issues that could result in people handing over medical information to a "big corporation." The law now makes the executive order permanent.

The governor appeared on Fox News' Laura Ingraham show on Thursday, shortly after legislators passed the measure and proclaimed that he was "the first, I think, elected official in the country, certainly state governor, to say we're not having ***vaccine*** passports."

"You have a right to participate in society without them asking you to divulge this type of health information like just to go to a movie, just to go to a ball game,'' DeSantis told the Fox News audience. "Our Legislature has passed what I asked for, and I'll be signing that very soon."

Ingraham asked what will happen if airports or airlines start requiring ***vaccine*** certificates.

"Well, they're not going to be able to do it in the state of Florida,'' DeSantis responded, as the crowd at the outdoor town hall in Orlando cheered.

Florida already requires other types of vaccines for students to attend public schools, but the restriction for ***COVID***-19 vaccines applies to schools as well as private businesses.

Simpson, a Trilby Republican, said he supported the governor's action in the face of the continuing pandemic.

"Make no mistake about it, families are still dealing with ***COVID*** where you have family members still dying of ***COVID***, but you have to ultimately weigh the balance of people's lives and their mental health and, and the amount of suicides and all of the things that go wrong by locking our citizens down," Simpson said.

Trying to strike a balance

Rep. Tom Leek, R-Ormond Beach, who led the Pandemics & Public Emergencies Committee that drafted the bill, said the goal of the measure was to strike "a delicate balance between protecting people and protecting people's civil liberties."

"What this legislation does is it makes sure that the state of Florida is planning and preparing for the next public health emergency,'' he said at the bill signing. "It funds the emergency response. It protects individual liberties. It limits government actors, and it provides transparency and accountability for those who would take your liberties."

Leek defended the restriction on ***vaccine*** authorizations during the House debate, saying that the ***COVID***-19 vaccines "don't have the same proven history of the same vaccines we require our school children to get. We must recognize that ***vaccine*** hesitancy is real and understandable."

He said that while he urges everyone to "please get vaccinated,'' there remains resistance among the minority community, and the bill tells businesses "they may not enact policies that unfairly and disparately discriminate against our minority populations."

But legislators critical of the measure noted that lawmakers did nothing this session to close the ***vaccine*** hesitancy gap, encourage people to get vaccinated, or educate people about vaccines.

The global pandemic exposed how unprepared Florida was for a public health emergency. Although appropriations are the constitutional prerogative of the Legislature, the governor controlled most of the emergency funding during the pandemic with no legislative authority or oversight.

The bill attempts to address that by imposing additional oversight while also giving the governor additional authority and also allowing him to override local orders if they are determined to "unnecessarily restrict individual rights or liberties."

Legal questions

But opponents warned the provision also opens the door to potential legal challenges because it delegates to the governor power that should reside in the Legislature.

Opponents also warned the bill could lead to First Amendment challenges because it strips private businesses and educational institutions of their ability to control their right to associate with unvaccinated people, which under law are not a protected class.

"I don't know many people who are going to get on a cruise if they don't have the security of knowing that the other people on that cruise with them, and in that close environment with them, have also been vaccinated,'' warned Rep. Omari Hardy, a West Palm Beach Democrat, during House debate last week.

Among other aspects of the bill, state agencies would be required to develop by the end of 2022 public health emergency plans and the Division of Emergency Management would have to stockpile personal protective equipment.

Mary Ellen Klas reported from Tallahassee. Miami Herald staff writers Douglas Hanks, Aaron Leibowitz and Martin Vassolo contributed to this report from South Florida.

Mary Ellen Klas can be reached at [*meklas@miamiherald.com*](mailto:meklas@miamiherald.com) and @MaryEllenKlas

**Load-Date:** May 4, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Residency proof not needed for vaccine at some sites in Florida, paving way for migrants*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:62JR-HV31-JC3J-X1FJ-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

April 29, 2021 Thursday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** coronavirus

**Length:** 1184 words

**Byline:**  Michelle Marchante and Devoun Cetoute

Miami Herald

**Body**

Florida has scrapped its rule requiring multiple proofs of residency to get a ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** now that sites are seeing a lower demand. It's a win for immigrant civil rights groups that said the requirement was barring undocumented migrant workers from getting a shot at protection.

The rule change expands ***vaccine*** access in the state to include anyone who is providing "goods and services" in Florida, which just means they're working in the state.

Florida Immigration Coalition, an immigrant civil rights group, told the Miami Herald in an email Friday that it's glad to see the change and considers it "long overdue."

"***COVID*** doesn't discriminate, neither should we. Over 700,000 Floridians have worked too hard, for too long to be used and abused as second-class citizens," the coalition said in a statement. "It's not fair to use our labor without protecting our bodies. ... Our fates, economics and our health are entwined."

The new criteria went into effect Friday at all state-run and federally supported vaccination sites, including Hard Rock Stadium in Miami Gardens, Tree Tops Park in Davie, and the FEMA-supported hub at Miami Dade College North campus. Miami-Dade County-run sites Tropical Park, Zoo Miami and Homestead Sports Complex followed suit.

"This is a win for all who call our community home. Eliminating barriers that prevent people from accessing the ***vaccine*** must continue to be a top priority for governments at all levels," Miami-Dade County Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** said on Twitter on Friday.

cava tweet

Florida Surgeon General Dr. Scott Rivkees issued the new public health advisory late Thursday. It rescinds an advisory issued in January that had restricted vaccinations to people who could show proof of Florida residency. The state said the restriction was to curb ***vaccine*** tourism, or people traveling from other countries to Florida just to get a shot.

Under the old advisory, Florida residents only needed to show a driver's license to get vaccinated. Snowbirds, or seasonal residents, needed to provide two documents that showed proof of residency.

Who is now eligible to get a ***COVID vaccine*** in Florida?

As of Friday, proof of residency is now verbal. You'll be asked if you're a Florida resident or if you're living in the state for work. If you say yes, you can get a shot, according to the state.

Everyone who wants a shot will still need to fill out a screening and consent form on site. Proof of age will still be required to comply with FDA emergency-use authorization. Moderna and J&J's minimum age is 18 years old. Pfizer starts at age 16.

Teens 16 and 17 can show a driver's license, ID card, birth certificate or passport. If they don't have the documents readily available, their parent or legal guardian -- who must be at the vaccination with them -- can also confirm their age.

Snowbirds, or seasonal residents, can also still get a ***vaccine***.

The new system is meant to make it easier for undocumented migrants and others who live or work in Florida to get vaccinated, especially now that sites are seeing lower demand, said Florida Division of Emergency Management spokeswoman Samantha Bequer.

The lower demand has already led Broward Health and Jackson Health System to move to stop administering first doses of the ***vaccine*** as May begins. Jackson went further and will completely stop vaccinating by May 21.

These South Florida ***vaccine*** sites don't take appointments or demand residency proof

The new advisory expanding ***vaccine*** access also comes a few weeks after the Miami Herald and other news outlets reported on how undocumented migrants were being turned away at vaccination sites. A handful of Florida Democratic members of Congress, including Congresswoman Debbie Wasserman Schultz, then sent letters to the governor's office. Vaccination sites are also seeing lower demand.

"Tearing down vaccination barriers protects everyone who calls Florida home, and ensures our undocumented friends and neighbors are not left exposed throughout this pandemic," Schultz said in a statement to the Miami Herald Friday. "Opening access to inoculations at all state and federal levels must remain a priority. It's the only way we will overcome this virus and keep all our communities healthy and economically secure."

Andrew Case, the senior counsel at LatinoJustice, a national civil rights organization with an office in Orlando, said he believes it was the public pressure, mixed with lower ***vaccine*** demand, that pushed Florida to end its "restrictive" residency requirement, which he said discriminated against the undocumented.

Now that Florida has ended its residency requirement, Case said his organization will be working with other local groups to ensure that there are no more ***vaccine*** access issues.

Experts have said that reports of immigrants being turned away have been rising, and a South Miami-Dade observer said most laborers and agricultural workers in the area don't have access to the ***vaccine***.

Oscar Londoño, executive director of WeCount!, a South Dade immigrant workers' center, said that while these proof of residency barriers should have never been implemented in the first place, removing them is still a step in the right direction .

"We believe this new change is long overdue and a good step forward in making sure that all of our residents, whether they have immigration status or not, have access to the ***vaccine*** and a full recovery," Londoño said.

Londoño says it is now vital to go back to communities to let them know that these barriers are no longer active while encouraging them to take the ***vaccine***. But he knows some barriers still persist past proof of residency.

"There have been long-standing barriers around language access since so many in our community don't speak any of the three primary languages [English, Spanish or Creole] but might speak native dialect," Londoño said. "We know there are on-going barriers around access to the internet and literacy."

El Nuevo Herald has also found evidence that suggests the majority of Miami-Dade Hispanics want to get vaccinated and are doing so at normal rates, despite encountering barriers like lack of legal documentation and not being able to speak English or Spanish (only speaking indigenous Latin American languages).

"Our members were some of the first to report that they were being turned away from vaccination sites, which is why we thought it was important to demand from both our local and state government that they act decisively to suspend these barriers," Londoño said.

Londoño advised there are more steps the state should be taking to continue to grow ***vaccine*** access.

One next step suggested was the state working with local government and community-based organizations to take vaccination sites and clinics directly to communities. He also says immigrant communities should be thought of and included in future relief aid.

Other groups, including the Florida Immigration Coalition, said it will be focusing on addressing ***vaccine*** hesitancy and misinformation, an issue it noticed while trying to help people get vaccinated.

Miami Herald staff writer Carli Teproff contributed to this report.

**Load-Date:** May 1, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Thanks to vaccinations, cruises could restart from South Florida in July, CDC says*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:62JH-JSF1-JC3J-X3J3-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

April 29, 2021 Thursday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** tourism\_cruises

**Length:** 1010 words

**Byline:**  Taylor Dolven and Alex Daugherty

Miami Herald

**Body**

Cruise companies can speed up their restarts in U.S. waters if they guarantee most crew and passengers are vaccinated against ***COVID***-19, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said in a letter to companies Wednesday night obtained by the Herald -- meaning passenger cruises could restart from South Florida in July.

If ships can certify that 98% of their crew and 95% of their passengers are vaccinated, they won't need to do test cruises before restarting passenger operations, the letter said. The CDC estimates that passengers could be boarding cruise ships in U.S. waters as soon as mid-July depending on how quickly cruise companies meet the agency's requirements.

The change to the restart timeline comes after a month of twice-weekly meetings between the CDC's maritime team and the cruise industry and ports.

CEO of Royal Caribbean International Michael Bayley said the quicker timeline for vaccinated cruises is a positive development.

"The mood of Royal Caribbean last night and late into the night was simply positive that all of this dialogue that was constructive resulted in clearly being heard," he said on a company earnings call Thursday. "The vaccines are the major foundational game changing element of this."

MIA\_102Cruiseship21NEWPPPCruise Ships Carnival Vista, left, and Carnival Sensation from Carnival Cruise Line, are seen docked at PortMiami after the CDC released a new phase of the Framework for Conditional Sailing Order for cruise ships operating or seeking to operate in U.S. waters, on Wednesday, April 21, 2021.

In its letter to cruise companies Wednesday, the CDC also changed testing and quarantine requirements for passengers and crew. Once U.S. cruises restart, fully vaccinated people will be required to take a rapid antigen test -- whose results are usually available within in a few hours -- before boarding instead of a PCR test, whose results can take days. Passengers who require a post-cruise quarantine period will be able to quarantine at their home if they live within driving distance of the ship.

Passengers have not boarded ocean cruises in U.S. waters since March 2020 after ***COVID***-19 outbreaks and deaths on multiple ships.

The CDC's conditional sail order, first issued in October, lays out benchmarks cruise companies must meet before they can welcome passengers back. The first phase required companies to ramp up their onboard ***COVID***-19 testing capabilities to be able to test crew members for the virus weekly and report results to the CDC.

Instructions for the second phase, published in early April, require companies to secure agreements with U.S. ports and local health authorities in the places they plan to visit and develop vaccination plans for passengers and crew.

None of the cruise companies have turned in their agreements to the CDC yet, according to sources familiar with the situation.

MIA\_SN1\_6792.JPGPort Director and CEO at PortMiami, Juan Kuryla, speaks during a press conference at a county pop-up vaccination site at PortMiami Terminal A on Wednesday, April 28, 2021.

PortMiami director Juan Kuryla said Wednesday he anticipates turning in Miami's agreements with cruise companies to the CDC next week. In a statement, Miami-Dade Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** said she's been encouraged by the joint meetings with the CDC this month.

"The new guidelines move us closer to reopening, reflecting the great progress being made on vaccination in Miami-Dade and across the country," she said.

Some cruise companies have already pledged to require all of their passengers and crew for U.S. cruises be fully vaccinated, including Virgin Voyages and Norwegian Cruise Line Holdings. Cruise companies are already enforcing the 100% ***vaccine*** rule for upcoming cruises in other countries, including the United Kingdom and Israel.

But in Florida, Governor Ron DeSantis said he will prevent cruise companies from guaranteeing everyone on board their ships has received the ***vaccine***, complicating company efforts to safely restart cruises.

DeSantis' office did not respond to a request for comment about the new CDC rules.

port.jpgOn April 8, Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis holds a press conference at PortMiami to announce a lawsuit against the CDC to try to get cruising restarted.

Earlier this month DeSantis sued the CDC in an effort to force the agency to allow for cruises to restart immediately in what legal experts call a "political stunt." The first hearing in the case is scheduled for May 12.

The CDC changes in the letter to companies Wednesday came after Florida Republicans introduced legislation that would have changed CDC restrictions on cruises to allow them to begin sailing by July.

Sen. Rick Scott, who introduced a bill with Sen. Marco Rubio and House Republicans earlier this month to override the CDC's previous requirements on cruise lines, praised the changes. The CDC's new guidance could allow cruises to begin by July, which was the intention of Scott's legislation.

"I am glad that the CDC has finally answered my calls to get things moving in the right direction so our cruise industry can get back to work," Scott said in a statement. "This new guidance from the CDC is a welcome change in course that will provide desperately needed clarity for so many employers and families in Florida and across the nation."

Rubio said the CDC's sped-up timeline for restarting cruises is "certainly progress" and that most cruise companies want to have their passengers and crew vaccinated.

"On the vaccination requirement, I think the companies were going to do that anyway and I'll obviously want to see how the details of the regulations apply to real life but it's certainly progress, at least it's a guidepost, a road map for moving forward," Rubio said in an interview on Capitol Hill.

Rubio said he's okay with the CDC recommending that the vast majority of passengers and crew should be vaccinated before resuming operations.

"I think if it gets them sailing, if that's what it takes to get them into the sea, to get these things moving, it's better than what we have now," Rubio said.

**Load-Date:** April 30, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Miami-Dade's wealthiest areas are almost fully vaccinated. Black communities are at 31%*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:62HX-9GW1-JC3J-X0G5-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

April 26, 2021 Monday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** coronavirus

**Length:** 2071 words

**Byline:**  Nicholas Nehamas, Ana Claudia Chacin, Ben Conarck and Sarah Blaskey

Miami Herald

**Body**

Roselle Monestime Noel, a 68-year-old home healthcare aide from North Miami, tried to get a coronavirus ***vaccine*** for two months.

It shouldn't have been so hard, Noel thought. Her age and job made her among the first group eligible under Florida's ***vaccine*** rollout. But the odds were against her from the start. Information was limited, and mostly in English, which, even after 40 years in Miami, was still something of a barrier for the Haitian immigrant.

Work did not leave her much time for ***vaccine*** hunting, either. And every time she phoned Jackson Health -- the only place she knew of giving out vaccines -- she was told there were no appointments available at all, much less on the weekend.

"I called so many times," Noel said.

Even though she knew her diabetes put her at higher risk for severe ***COVID***-19 infection and she was also terrified of giving the virus to the elderly woman she cared for, Noel had practically given up by the third week of March.

At the time, only about 13% of adults who lived in Noel's majority-Black ZIP Code had been vaccinated, according to an el Nuevo Herald/Miami Herald analysis that used population estimates from the U.S. Census and vaccination data provided by Miami-Dade County. That differed starkly from wealthier, whiter enclaves like Key Biscayne and Fisher Island, where nearly all adults had already received at least one shot.

Unlike many of her neighbors, Noel caught a break: Her daughter happened to see an Instagram post about the city of North Miami hosting a ***vaccine*** pop-up at a community center. The location, just a few blocks from Noel's home, and the timing, a Saturday, were ideal. Noel finally got her shot.

"I praise the Lord for that," Noel said outside the mobile vaccination site on March 21. "I praise the Lord for North Miami. They're doing a wonderful job."

'Praise the Lord': North Miami woman receives ***COVID***-19 vaccineRoselle Monestime Noel, a 68-year-old home healthcare aide, received a ***vaccine*** at a pop-up site in North Miami after trying to find an appointment for two months.

The North Miami pop-up was part of wider efforts by state, county and local officials to address lagging vaccination rates in underserved communities since March.

Now almost half of adults in Miami-Dade have received at least one dose of the ***vaccine***. But the disparities between Black and white communities, and rich and poor, have remained largely unchanged.

Despite a month of door knocking, mobile ***vaccine*** campaigns, the addition of federally supported vaccination sites in minority neighborhoods, and loosened state eligibility restrictions, vaccination rates in majority-Black areas were still nearly 40% lower than the county as a whole as of April 17, the Herald analysis found.

See how we got the numbers

Politicians have been quick to blame the disparity on ***vaccine*** "hesitancy." But residents of under-vaccinated communities interviewed by the Herald described a far more complex range of emotional reasoning and logistical hurdles.

There was never just one thing that kept someone from getting vaccinated but rather a compounding and often fluid set of circumstances: lack of information from trusted sources, a complicated appointment sign-up system that privileged white-collar workers with more flexible schedules and paid time off, difficult-to-reach vaccination sites that required access to a car, and doctor's note requirements that disproportionately hurt underinsured Black and brown communities that have less access to doctors.

The hassle of getting a ***vaccine*** can be the determining factor for a patient who is feeling any amount of fear or uncertainty, said Muriel Jean-Jacques, a clinician and assistant professor of medicine at Northwestern University who studies ***vaccine*** inequities.

"You're able to get [patients] from an 'I don't think so' or 'I'm not sure' to a 'yes,' but then they can't just go get a ***vaccine*** down the hall. Instead, they have to go home and try to deal with an online system -- and that 'yes' quickly turns back to a 'no,' " Jean-Jacques said.

Disparities in Miami-Dade's vaccination rates largely result from poverty and the resulting structural barriers, she and other experts interviewed by the Herald agreed.

Vaccination rates were lower in communities where people lack access to vehicles and health insurance, the Herald analysis found. Overall, vaccination rates were 30% lower in ZIP Codes where more than a quarter of residents live in poverty.

MD\_VaxZip\_2Maps\_April

Despite public health experts saying it is crucial to publish and share such data, neither the state nor Miami-Dade County regularly send ZIP Code data to city officials.

Jackson Health, one of the biggest providers of vaccines to Black Miami-Dade residents, says that ***vaccine*** demand is slowing and that it will no longer give out shots. If demand does not pick up, the vaccination disparity could become permanent, with potential long-term negative effects on the health of Black communities, experts warned.

"We need to be so intentional and so deliberate in trying to prevent disparities from the get-go when we have the opportunity and to remedy them as quickly as possible once we're aware of them," Jean-Jacques said.

'Not rocket science'

The scale of the disparities shown in the Herald analysis was not only predictable but also preventable, said Georges Benjamin, executive director of the American Public Health Association.

"Equity doesn't happen automatically. It happens by intent," Benjamin said. "So if you're trying to achieve equity, you have to devise a plan that will achieve equity. And if you don't do that, you will get what you got: an unequal distribution. That's not rocket science. That's math."

In order to avoid replicating existing inequities, Florida should have made it easier for Black residents to get shots from trusted sources from the first day vaccines were available and started its rollout by sending more doses to Black communities than to wealthier, white ones, according to Benjamin and interviews with five other public health experts.

Instead, Gov. Ron DeSantis' December rollout privileged age over other risk factors and ignored an abundance of public health research that shows color-blind policies lead to racial and economic disparities in health outcomes.

MIA\_0229ChapmanVaccine042221Chapman Partnership resident, Mirlange Jeune, is vaccinated by medical assistant Mauricio Garcia as Jeune's daughter Angela Exantus looks on. Moderna ***COVID***-19 vaccinations were administered to residents, staff and families at the homeless shelter on April 22.

In March, under fire for how many pop-up sites were being opened in wealthy, white, gated communities, the state began working with the federal government to bring sites to predominantly Black areas. But the Herald found the sites did little to combat disparities. Few people from surrounding communities showed up, in part because there was little advertising beyond social media. The same lack of outreach affected sites that the state opened in partnership with Miami-Dade municipalities.

Noel, for instance, said that without help from her daughter she never would have seen the Instagram post that allowed her to get a ***vaccine***.

"I don't use any social media," she said. "I'm an old lady. I don't want to be bothered with that stuff."

The vaccination rate where Noel lives is still only half of the county rate overall, and far below wealthy areas like Coral Gables, Miami's Brickell financial district and Aventura.

"Are you serious? That's horrible," said North Miami Councilman Alix Desulme, who lives in the same ZIP Code as Noel and has also been vaccinated, when a Herald reporter told him of the disparities.

Desulme said the cash-strapped city could not spend much of its own money on outreach.

"This is not working. We need to know how bad the problem is so we can try to allocate our resources and get people vaccinated," he said. "I'm going to try and get on the phone with the governor. This is crazy."

alix\_desulmeNorth Miami City Councilman Alix Desulme.

In addition to North Miami, areas of Sweetwater, Liberty City, Miami Gardens, Opa-locka, North Miami Beach, Homestead and Florida City, which are predominantly Black or have large numbers of poor Hispanic residents, have the lowest vaccination rates in the county. Together, the 10 ZIP Codes with the lowest vaccination rate have only 30% of adults vaccinated. The top 10 have 88% of adults vaccinated.

"This is incredibly valuable data," said Erica Avila, a Homestead councilwoman.

Like every local official interviewed for this story, Avila did not know the ZIP Code data existed, even though the numbers are collected by the Florida Department of Health and sent weekly to Miami-Dade County's Office of Emergency Management, which provided them to the Herald.

Avila said she now plans to target door-knocking campaigns to the ZIP Codes in Homestead with the lowest vaccination rates.

Document.jpegHomestead Councilwoman Erica Avila.

DeSantis' office did not respond to a request for comment for this story. Neither did the Florida Department of Health or the Florida Division of Emergency Management.

Withholding data

After being contacted by the Herald, Miami-Dade County emergency management officials now plan to share the ZIP Code data with the county's 34 municipalities, according to Rachel Johnson, a spokeswoman for Miami-Dade Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava***.

"I'm sure sharing the data with these cities will help focus their efforts," Johnson said.

The state of Florida, which provides the data to the county, has not committed to that kind of transparency.

The Herald was unable to perform a statewide analysis of vaccination rates by ZIP Code -- something public health experts say is crucial to understanding which communities are being failed by the state's ***vaccine*** rollout -- because the Florida Department of Health has not released comprehensive data to the public, despite requests from multiple news outlets.

After Orange County officials released ZIP Code vaccination rates to journalists in mid-April, the state cut off the county's access to its data, news station WFTV reported.

MIA\_0196ChapmanVaccine042221Moderna ***COVID***-19 vaccinations are administered to residents, staff and families at Chapman Partnership, a homeless shelter, on Thursday, April 22, 2021.

Facing the threat of a lawsuit from the Herald and a consortium of other news outlets, DOH provided limited vaccination data by ZIP Code from inconsistent dates between February and April for six other counties: Alachua, Lake, Leon, Nassau, Sarasota and Orange. (DOH also provided maps showing vaccination rates by ZIP Code for five additional counties, but not the underlying data, making it impossible to analyze.)

Get the data

An analysis of those records by county shows trends similar to Miami-Dade: Areas where more Black people live tended to have lower vaccination rates than the county overall.

In most of the counties where data were provided, areas with a higher proportion of Hispanic residents also tended to have lower vaccination rates. That's different from Miami-Dade, where Hispanics make up a majority of the population and majority-Hispanic communities have been vaccinated at the same rate as the county overall.

But across every county, areas with higher rates of poverty and other structural barriers like lack of access to vehicles or insurance also had lower vaccination rates.

Learn more about the data sources and analysis

Poverty is more common in Black and Hispanic communities, creating disproportionate barriers for ***vaccine*** access, said Monique Brown, an assistant professor at the University of South Carolina's Arnold School of Public Health.

"Working might be one of the barriers, transportation issues," Brown said. "The digital divide: If appointments have to be made digitally, that's a barrier."

Wealthier, tech-savvy residents don't face those kinds of challenges.

"I had the time and the skills to track this down," said one 70-year-old Black woman who works from home in North Miami Beach and asked not to be named. "And I fought."

The woman said she spent weeks hitting the "refresh" button on appointment websites and making phone calls before finally getting her first shot in early February at a site in Lauderhill -- a city that is almost 80% Black.

Aside from the site's healthcare workers, she said, she was the only Black person there.

Miami Herald staff writer Douglas Hanks contributed to this report.

**Load-Date:** April 16, 2022

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*New ID program expands vaccine access for immigrants and other vulnerable Broward residents*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:62HF-PSN1-DYJM-M4CR-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

April 24, 2021 Saturday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** broward

**Length:** 1112 words

**Byline:**  Lautaro Grinspan

Miami Herald

**Body**

Throughout Florida's ***COVID***-19 vaccination rollout, some residents who lack state-issued photo IDs have struggled to get the shot, a result of the proof of residency requirements imposed by the state to clamp down on "***vaccine*** tourism."

But in Broward County, that obstacle could soon be reduced, as a new program aims to create local IDs for county residents who currently don't have one -- including undocumented immigrants.

Supporters of this community ID measure -- which the Broward County Commission approved earlier this week -- say it will not only expand vulnerable residents' access to the ***vaccine***, but also make it easier to sign up for other county and health services.

According to Broward Commissioner Dale Holness, who sponsored the resolution, the creation of a community ID program would be beneficial to many different kinds of marginalized groups, including returning citizens and homeless people.

"It will also help people who are senior or low-income who may have lost their identification, and it will also certainly help immigrants who might not have proper documentation."

Some ICE detainees in Florida get ***COVID vaccine*** as part of federal court case settlement

"This is a program that I believe will help build a better Broward County for all of us," he added. "And it will definitely expand ***vaccine*** access because there are people currently who want to get the ***vaccine*** but don't have any identification and get turned away."

In an email, Nina Levine, a public information officer for the Florida Department of Health in Broward County, confirmed that Broward's new community IDs will be accepted as valid proof of Florida residency in local vaccination sites.

Broward Sheriff Gregory Tony also stated that his agency will honor the new ID cards, and communicated in a letter of support to Holness his belief that community IDs will have a positive impact on public safety.

The approved resolution is the product of a months-long campaign of advocacy and outreach by a diverse coalition of community organizations, including United We Dream, Hispanic Unity of Florida, Florida Immigrant Coalition, Southern Poverty Law Center, the Pride Center and the Aging & Disability Resource Center of Broward County, among others.

The community ID program will be run by the Legal Aid Service of Broward County. Holness expects residents will be able to sign up for community IDs by the end of next month. The IDs will cost $20.

HOW COMMUNITY ID PROGRAMS WORK

Instead of being directly administered by a county or a city, community IDs are issued by a third party non-profit, with a county or a city's approval. This technicality means that ID recipients' personal information is kept private, since third party non-profits are not susceptible to public records laws the way municipalities are.

Community IDs include a person's photo, name, date of birth and address.

Because they are not official government documents, community IDs cannot be used to cast a ballot or board a plane. Rather, they are meant to help recipients fulfill everyday tasks that require identification, such as signing up for a library card, filling a prescription, or being identified as a parent in school.

Across the country, faith groups and religious organizations have taken the lead in championing the spread of community ID programs. FaithAction, a Greensboro-based nonprofit, helped launch the first such program in North Carolina in 2013, and it will be involved in the Broward launch as well.

At the moment, the national "FaithAction ID Network" already includes several Florida jurisdictions, including the cities of Gainesville and West Palm Beach.

"This is already a developed program in Florida," said Romina Montenegro, Florida advocacy coordinator for United We Dream, an immigrant youth-led network. "What we are hoping to do is spread it out as much as possible throughout the whole state."

EXPANDING ***VACCINE*** ACCESS

In Florida, a valid state driver's license or U.S. government-issued photo identification aren't the only kind of documentation ***vaccine*** seekers can show to prove Florida residency. A utility bill with a Florida address and the individual's name, or a rental agreement, are accepted as well. Mail from a financial institution or a government agency that shows the person's name and Florida address can also be provided as proof. But still, experts say that those requirements are not flexible enough, noting that some community members, such as many undocumented immigrants, do not have a long-term lease or utility bills to their name.

"In situations where many families live in one house, the lease is usually just under one person's name," said Mariana Martinez, an organizer with the American Friends Service Committee, a nonprofit immigrant organization. "Not everyone that lives in that house is included. Having a local ID that demonstrates your address, your name, and your age just confirms that you are part of your community ... It will be an easier process for everyone to have access to vaccines."

Ensuring immigrant communities have adequate information about and access to ***COVID***-19 vaccines has been a priority for WeCount!, a South Dade immigrant workers' center.

Claudia Navarro, deputy director of WeCount!, views Broward's community ID program as a step in the right direction.

"Currently, thousands of undocumented and housing insecure residents in Miami-Dade County are being unfairly and inhumanely excluded from ***vaccine*** access due to the state's proof of residency requirements," she wrote in an email to the Herald.

"Broward County's decision to pass community IDs is a powerful example of how local government should be leading in this moment. Miami-Dade County must now follow their lead. There is no excuse for inaction."

THE FUTURE OF COMMUNITY IDS IN MIAMI-DADE

As county commissioner, current county mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** championed the creation of a community ID program in Miami-Dade. She has since passed the legislative baton to District 5 commissioner Eileen Higgins.

At a community gathering last month organized by People Acting for Community Together (PACT), an interfaith community organizing group based in Miami, both Higgins and Levine Cava expressed their commitment to seeing a community ID program through in Miami-Dade, with Higgins vowing to bring the item to the Board of County Commissioners within the next 90 days.

"Miami-Dade has a dire need for community IDs. If we got it passed in Broward, they need to pass it in Miami-Dade," said Oliver Torres, a Miami-based senior outreach paralegal at the Southern Poverty Law Center. "There's too many vulnerable people here who cannot get vaccinated right now."

**Load-Date:** April 26, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Miami-Dade, Broward partner to combat vaccine inequities in Black, Hispanic communities*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:62H5-SFW1-JC3J-X013-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

April 22, 2021 Thursday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** coronavirus

**Length:** 1451 words

**Byline:**  Devoun Cetoute

Miami Herald

**Body**

Black and Hispanic communities aren't strangers to being marginalized in South Florida, and the coronavirus pandemic has exacerbated that cultural stigma.

A majority of Black residents have yet to receive any dose of the ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine***, even while Miami-Dade County recently surpassed 1 million partially or fully vaccinated residents and Broward County is close behind at more than 750,000 inoculations, according to Florida Department of Health data.

Miami-Dade Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** and Broward Mayor Steve Geller now have metaphorically eradicated county lines -- along with several commissioners and community members -- to resolve this issue.

"I know we have a problem right now and we need to solve it," Geller said. "In order to solve this we need to have everyone involved."

Both counties on Wednesday partnered with the Health Foundation of South Florida to kick off the "I Did It!" ***vaccine*** education campaign.

"***COVID*** doesn't respect county lines so our efforts will not respect county lines," Miami-Dade Vice Chairman Oliver Gilbert said at the campaign's announcement. "The real world consequence of people not getting vaccinated is people dying."

The "I Did It!" initiative will aggressively target underserved Black and Hispanic neighborhoods in Miami-Dade and Broward -- including Homestead, West Park, Liberty City, Fort Lauderdale's Sistrunk, Overtown, Little Haiti and Miami Gardens.

"We are going into neighborhoods where people are," Cava told the Miami Herald. "We're doing everything we can to make sure there is no excuse. This is a no excuse campaign."

Through billboards, TV commercials, door-to-door visits and a strong online presence, the campaign hopes to reach residents who may be hesitant in taking the ***vaccine***, an apprehensiveness that some believe stems from a lack of accessible information or declining faith in government institutions.

"The campaign is really about getting people information," said Loreen Chant, president and CEO of the Health Foundation of South Florida. "We know there's a lot of disinformation and a lot of hesitancy, yet at the same we also we know the only, safest path forward is to get vaccinated."

South Florida residents can expect to see informative videos featuring people of diverse races and ethnicities proudly saying they received the ***vaccine*** and explaining why they chose to do so, in both English and Spanish.

IMG\_1933.JPGMiami-Dade and Broward counties joined the Health Foundation of South Florida in launching a ***vaccine*** education campaign that targets Black and Hispanic residents. "We are going into neighborhoods where people are," said Miami-Dade Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava***.

'We wanted our campaign to be inspiring and encouraging'

Black residents told the Miami Herald earlier this year that they have felt neglected and left behind by Miami-Dade County throughout the pandemic.

"They knock on doors when it's time to vote for them, but not knock on doors to [educate] so many African-American people," Black Community Leader Romania Dukes said in late February.

During the early months of the pandemic, Florida Department of Health data showed Black residents were dying at higher rates than white people.

Despite the absence of restrictions that experts say initially held back the African-American community from getting vaccinated -- such as mandatory signed doctor forms -- there remains a stark gap in inoculation rates between Black people and their white counterparts.

As of Wednesday, only 16% of the Black population in Miami-Dade and Broward have been partially or fully vaccinated compared to 37% of white Broward residents and 36% of white Miami-Dade residents.

This chasm has prevailed even through the uptick in walk-up sites, which allow residents who do not have the means to set up an appointment online or use a drive-through site as an alternative option for getting a vaccination.

While less restrictions and more options haven't yet proven to close the gap, the Black community is also facing historical ***vaccine*** hesitancy and distrust in the healthcare system.

While the origins of this uncertainty is debated, one historical example was the "Tuskegee Study." About 600 Black men were used as research subjects to examine the history of syphilis and how to treat it among the African-American community, according to historical information from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The 1932 study was supposed to last six months; however, it went on for 40 years after Black men were misled into giving consent for the study. Even when a treatment for syphilis was found -- penicillin -- they were never given adequate treatment to treat the disease or the option to leave the study.

With ***vaccine*** apprehension and other barriers impacting Black residents, the "I Did It!" push is looking to the community for solutions.

"From the beginning we knew the community needed to be at the heart of the campaign," Chant said. "We wanted our campaign to be inspiring and encouraging."

In this spirit, the Health Foundation announced $600,000 in grants would be earmarked to 10 community organizations in Miami-Dade and Broward to specifically work as "trusted messengers" and instill ***vaccine*** confidence, Chant said.

"This is not a one-size-fits-all approach," Chant added. "Our goal and hope is that everyone will see that members in their community have done it, then get more information and realize it is the best way forward."

Daniella Pierre, president of Miami's NAACP branch, hopes that this new initiative will allow residents to share their positive experiences about receiving a vaccination.

"I think that story sharing is part of the complete story on how we get to being fully vaccinated and getting herd immunity," Pierre said. "All stories matter and I hope it will be inclusive in this initiative."

Pierre proceeded to say the education campaign is vital and necessary, and outreach from community members can help with hesitancy.

"Our local neighbors, seniors and those who come from the community who have overcome ***vaccine*** hesitancy, we need to hear from them," Pierre said.

Is this the right approach for Hispanic communities?

An emphasis on ***vaccine*** education and reducing hesitancy is the same approach the campaign will be taking for South Florida's Hispanic communities, though the residents contend that may not be the only solution needed.

In Miami-Dade, Hispanics make up 50% of the 1.1 million residents who have been either partially or fully vaccinated, Florida DOH data shows.

But while they are nearly the majority of county residents who received a shot, only 30% of Miami-Dade's total Hispanic population have gotten one -- which is substantially more than the Black community, but still lagging behind white residents.

A county away, Broward is seeing a larger gap in the inoculation rates of its Hispanic population, as they only make up 23% of the more than 750,000 residents who have gotten a shot. Among the entire Broward Hispanic community, only 28% have gotten a ***vaccine***.

The issues that cause this disparity may differ from what ails the Black community. Through a recent survey, interviews with community members and data analysis, the el Nuevo Herald has found evidence that suggests the majority of Miami-Dade Hispanics want to get vaccinated and are doing so at normal rates.

Not being able to miss a work day, lack of legal documentation and not being able to speak English or Spanish (only speaking indigenous Latin American languages), are all nuanced factors that bar Hispanics from getting vaccinated.

The "I Did It!" effort is hoping to help resolve some of these problems, like the language barrier. The campaign's website notes that it will soon offer educational materials in Portuguese and Creole.

Disinformation and a mistrust in the healthcare industry is as much a factor in the Hispanic community as it is in the Black community, according to experts, and the campaign has created fact sheets to dispel common misconceptions.

Reasons\_Black Community\_BRANDABLE.pptx.jpg

A measure of success

The "I Did It!" campaign will be a large effort covering unique neighborhoods with its owns struggles and barriers to vaccination. A standard benchmark to highlight improvement in vaccination rates in such areas wouldn't be effective, Chant said.

The Health Foundation is working with the Department of Health to create customized baselines for each neighborhood to create a more accurate picture of the campaign's work.

"I'm excited to look at the data and then sit down and really challenge our partners and ourselves," Chant said. "[We'll] ultimately have faith in the community that when we assess the effectiveness of this campaign, we will know we did it. Wouldn't it be amazing?"

**Load-Date:** April 23, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Jackson hospital, major vaccinator of Miami-Dade residents, to end first doses soon*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:62GY-4XR1-JC3J-X2PS-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

April 21, 2021 Wednesday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** coronavirus

**Length:** 850 words

**Byline:**  Ben Conarck

Miami Herald

**Body**

As vaccination demand drops, Miami-Dade's public hospital, Jackson Health System, is ending its four-month run as a key ***COVID vaccine*** provider in Florida's most populous county.

As the rollout progressed from nurses and healthcare workers in December to the general public in January, Jackson became one of the largest vaccinators in Miami-Dade. After establishing three vaccination sites at its various campuses, the public hospital emphasized equity, attempting to reach Black residents through local churches and nonprofits.

Jackson initially required a doctor's note for medically vulnerable people under the state's age minimum, but it eliminated that barrier over concerns it would prevent people without insurance from getting a shot. More recently, Jackson partnered with local colleges to boost vaccinations for international students and offered walk-up access to accommodate people who don't navigate the internet.

The hospital has been receiving 9,000 doses of the Pfizer BioNTech ***vaccine*** from state officials per week, In a press release on Wednesday, Jackson noted that 15% of the more than 167,000 people it vaccinated self-identified as Black and 54% identified as Hispanic. Going forward, the doses will be diverted to the county instead.

"In the first months, we were providing an overwhelming share of our community's volume. Thankfully, coordination among federal, state, local, and private stakeholders has dramatically expanded access across Miami-Dade. As a result, we have seen a decrease in demand," said Carlos Migoya, Jackson's CEO.

He added that the hospital "is not finished with the pandemic. We are still dedicating substantial resources to treating ***COVID***-positive patients in our hospitals, emergency departments and clinics."

Hospital officials have previously cited the cost of running the three clinics, primarily through staffing. The hospital said it has anywhere from 250 to 275 people working per day, seven days a week, at its sites, and the program has cost $5 million in total.

Jackson will offer first doses through April 30 and second shots through May 21. The second doses will be administered at the Christine E. Lynn Rehabilitation Center at Jackson's main campus, Jackson South Medical Center and the North Dade Health Center.

County to focus efforts on tourism and hospitality industries

In a letter to county commissioners, Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** relayed the news about Jackson, saying the supply will now come directly to the county government.

"We will administer these vaccines to residents including the tens of thousands of people signed up on our pre-registration system with expanded daily vaccination efforts at Tropical Park, Zoo Miami and Homestead Speedway," Levine Cava said.

The mayor said the doses would also go toward mobile vaccination programs for hospitality and tourism workforces, as well as younger adults. She said locations could include Miami International Airport, PortMiami, schools, malls , hotels and restaurants.

"Our community is deeply grateful to our partners at Jackson and the healthcare heroes who have gone above and beyond the call of duty for months to protect public health during this unprecedented crisis," Levine Cava said in the letter.

Demand dropping across county

There are about 90,000 people still registered for ***vaccine*** appointments in the county's waiting-list website, which can be found at miamidade.gov/***vaccine***, said Rachel Johnson, Levine Cava's communications director. She said more appointments will be offered once the Jackson supply is available, with up to 1,000 slots possible daily, compared to about 450 per day now.

It's unclear how many people on the county's pre-registration list are actually still waiting on a ***vaccine***.

Jackson officials said that demand had been dwindling for some time, both through the online portal and through its partnerships with non-profit groups and houses of worship. On April 3, the hospital did more than 4,000 shots, including 1,792 first shots, considered a very busy day.

On Tuesday, 17 days later, the hospital administered 1,376 shots, according to spokesperson Lidia Amoretti-Morgado. She added that the nonprofit and faith-based groups "didn't express any concern or hesitation" when notified Jackson was ending its program.

The end of Jackson's vaccination run coincides with a downshift of injections across Miami-Dade..

The latest data from Florida's Health Department show daily vaccinations are down about 20% in Miami-Dade since a peak on April 12, when all county sites tracked by the state were administering about 31,800 vaccines per day. This week, that average is down to about 25,000 a day.

The drop-off coincided with the sudden halt in administering Johnson & Johnson vaccines nationwide on April 13 following a safety review launched by federal regulators.

While hospitals and Miami-Dade's county-run sites rarely used Johnson & Johnson vaccines, they were mainstays at the large vaccination site set up at Miami-Dade College North by Florida and the federal government.

Miami Herald Staff Writer Douglas Hanks contributed to this report.

**Load-Date:** April 21, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Kim Kardashian celebrates in Miami as curfew is lifted, despite pandemic raging on*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:62GD-HB71-DYJM-M223-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

April 19, 2021 Monday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** miamicom\_news

**Length:** 432 words

**Byline:**  Madeleine Marr

Miami Herald

**Body**

Mom's night out, pandemic style.

Kim Kardashian made her way from Los Angeles Friday night to celebrate the opening of the Goodtime Hotel in Miami Beach -- as well as her newly single status. The 40-year-old mom of four partied with such 305 royalty as David and Victoria Beckham, Latin pop star Maluma, pal Foodgod, and Goodtime co-owner Pharrell Williams. Also seen in the crowd: actress Vanessa Hudgens, Chris Rock, Rick Ross, Future, Bad Bunny and Becky G.

It's unclear why no one had masks on, although a hotel rep told Miami.com that the party was outdoors.

According to Miami-Dade Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava***, who was actually one of the few people masked up at the Goodtime party, we should all still be wearing them.

"The fundamentals in a sound ***COVID*** response have not changed, and that's why it's essential that we continue taking key actions we know are effective in fighting the spread: wearing masks, maintaining social distance, and sanitizing frequently," reads Miami-Dade County website's updated coronavirus policies. "As vaccination ramps up with expanded supply and eligibility, it's critical that we stay vigilant and remain consistent in following these public health guidelines to get us safely through the final chapter of the pandemic."

Perhaps the guests were all vaccinated, but we have seen few selfies of the sort. And we have a feeling that in Kim's case, at least, she would post something like that.

liv weekend

Maybe Kardashian knew it was not cool to blow off the pandemic, even in its final stages. A glance of her timeline has not one static pic of the high-wattage bash, though her Stories showing her among a packed crowd later at LIV nightclub, which reopened after over a year when the ***curfew*** was lifted.

The SKIMS' founder's short-lived Insta videos surrounded by so many bare-faced partiers got a not so positive reaction from followers. Many slammed her for not engaging in responsible behavior and being a bad role model.

But Kardashian did indeed look right at home and happy with the well- and high-heeled crowd. A few weeks ago, Life & Style reported that the reality star was considering moving to South Florida as a single mom.

"She had the time of her life filming 'Kourtney & Kim Take Miami' there years ago and has always loved South Florida," an insider told the media outlet back in February. "She's checking out Miami real estate -- and Miami men."

A source recently told E! Online that the thrice-married businesswoman's plans are still up in the air in the wake of her split with Kanye West, and that she is still getting used to her "new norm."

**Load-Date:** April 19, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*LIV can get loud: Miami Beach removes COVID-19 noise limit ahead of club's reopening*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:62FG-1231-JC3J-X4B1-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

April 14, 2021 Wednesday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** miami\_beach

**Length:** 479 words

**Byline:**  Martin Vassolo

Miami Herald

**Body**

Hours after Miami Beach city officials met with representatives of the Fontainebleau to discuss the reopening of the hotel's LIV nightclub, the city announced it would remove a ***COVID***-era noise restriction that would have hampered the club's Friday opening.

The emergency order, which banned music and live performances louder than conversation level, applied only to businesses with food licenses. The measure went into effect Sept. 29 but now is set to expire Thursday, just in time for the reopening of LIV more than a year since the club closed due to the pandemic.

The city called Wednesday's meeting with the Fontainebleau after learning of the club's scheduled reopening, which will feature DJ performances all weekend, Assistant City Manager Eric Carpenter told the Miami Herald. LIV has a food license and thus would be at risk of a 24-hour closure if it played music above ambient levels, a city spokeswoman said.

"It just called to light the fact that we had a conflict there," Acting City Manager Mark Taxis said in an interview.

Taxis issued an amended ***COVID***-19 emergency declaration on Wednesday, which "removes the ambient level volume restriction applicable to music and live entertainment throughout the City," according to a press release.

Taxis, who is temporarily in charge at City Hall while Interim City Manager Raul Aguila recovers from minor surgery, called members of the City Commission to ask their opinion before moving to rescind the order.

Despite his concerns about the virus, Mayor Dan Gelber said he did not object to canceling the order after hearing from the city's legal staff.

"I hope people use good judgment because we're still seeing plenty of people checking into the hospital," he said.

Five of seven commissioners reached Wednesday by the Herald said they approved lifting the order.

Commissioner Michael Góngora said the city recommended removing the restriction, and he agreed. Keeping it in place, he argued, would put LIV and the rest of the Beach's nightlife scene at a disadvantage compared to its rivals across Biscayne Bay. The city has shut down several businesses, including the Clevelander South Beach, for violating the noise restriction.

"I haven't been in favor of it," Góngora said.

Miami-Dade County has lifted its midnight ***curfew*** and most other ***COVID*** rules for businesses, including a measure requiring that music be set lower than 90 decibels, which is still higher than conversation level. LIV owner David Grutman spoke at Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava***'s press conference announcing the end of the ***curfew***.

Commissioner Ricky Arriola, who has long fought the city's ***COVID*** restrictions, said the city made the right move considering residents and tourists have signaled they are ready to enjoy Miami Beach's nightlife again.

"I support lifting the ambient noise order because we would be the only city in the state with one," he said.

**Load-Date:** April 15, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Does COVID test positivity still matter? Vaccines are upending trusted virus metrics*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:62F9-BHV1-JC3J-X3KS-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

April 14, 2021 Wednesday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** coronavirus

**Length:** 1225 words

**Byline:**  Ben Conarck

Miami Herald

**Body**

About four out of every 10 Floridians have received at least one dose of a ***COVID vaccine*** -- a shift in the pandemic landscape that has upended the meaningfulness of various statistics that health experts, government officials and the public have relied on for the last year.

Vaccines haven't just cut the number of people at risk of developing severe disease. They've also skewed the pool of who's still getting tested for the virus, impacting still closely watched numbers like daily case counts and the percentage of tests coming back positive.

Some things haven't changed. Hospitalizations from the virus have always been the most reliable way to gauge spread in a community. Now, the number of people hospitalized has become the single most important measure in understanding both the severity of an outbreak and how effectively the vaccines are working.

"The relationship between each of these metrics and what they mean for the future is rapidly changing," said Stephen Kissler, an immunology and infectious disease expert with Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health.

Test positivity loses some meaning

One of the foremost statistics used to measure spread of the virus, test positivity, has been undercut by the shifts in who is getting tested and vaccines, according to experts interviewed by the Miami Herald.

"I don't think positivity is very useful anymore," said Eric Toner, a senior scholar at the Johns Hopkins Center for Global Health Security.

Early in the pandemic, Toner said, positivity was an especially crucial statistic, because most cases were being missed.

That changed during Florida's fall coronavirus lull, when access to testing expanded following a summer surge and record positivity rates. Heading into the winter, Florida's case counts were more accurate and timely, and the positivity rates became useful again, but for a different reason.

By late summer, positivity became essential for detecting increases in spread, such as the rise in cases following holiday gatherings, when testing levels had reached their heights, and most recently again in early to mid-March.

Kissler, the Harvard infectious disease expert, said test positivity will still be a good measure to detect subtle increases in spread signaling a future rise in cases, but it no longer serves as a valid comparison point to earlier in the pandemic.

"Comparing the raw number of positivity is really difficult," he said. "We should be calibrating that to the number of hospitalizations."

Some local officials appear to have reached that conclusion already. Miami-Dade Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** wrote in a March 5 memo that she would lift the county's ***curfew*** if the test positivity hit 5.5% or less.

That never happened, but a month later, Levine Cava lifted the ***curfew*** anyway.

"We considered all the available data, including the 14-day [test] positivity rate, and also hospitalization from ***COVID*** and death rates," Levine Cava said in explaining her decision. "These have all declined significantly as vaccinations for the most vulnerable have expanded and our overall vaccination program has progressed."

***COVID*** cases are rising. But what about hospitalizations?

Well into the spring of 2021, a lot has changed. But in mid-March, something familiar happened: Cases rose again.

People under 50 were driving the increases in cases, which were concentrated in coastal and urban counties. Public health experts said the case rises could likely be attributed to a mix of changing behaviors, more-infectious variants and spring break tourism.

MIA\_MIAMI\_BEACH\_DAV5.JPGCrowds party in the street while a speaker blasts music an hour past ***curfew*** in Miami Beach, Florida, on Sunday, March 21, 2021. As Miami Beach Police closed down Ocean Drive, droves of people moved west toward Alton Road before a few arrests broke up the crowd.

It was the same way ***COVID*** surges had started in the past: young people catching the virus, then spreading it to older people who are more susceptible to severe illness. That has played out in two-week delays: one between rising infections and rising cases, and another between case rises and mirroring rises in hospitalizations.

Florida's latest case rise started two weeks into peak tourist season, around March 15, when the seven-day average of daily cases was at 4,575. As of April 10, the seven-day average rose to 5,824, a 27% increase.

But this rise in cases has been different. The volume of ***COVID*** patients in the state of Florida started to creep up in April, about two weeks after cases started rising. And yet the increase in hospitalizations has been less pronounced than the rise in cases. At the start of the week, 3,186 patients were hospitalized with ***COVID***, about a 12.5% rise from the most recent low of 2,831 patients on March 27.

Vaccines, combined with the shifts in testing, mean the vast majority of testing is being done on people who are at lower risk of becoming severely ill, said Kissler. They are also more likely to be younger people mandated by their employer to get tested and therefore more likely to be asymptomatic.

Kissler said that has been the case across the country: a national rise in cases hasn't been followed by the same rise in hospitalizations.

"It's pretty clear vaccines are helping with that, but it makes it much harder to interpret the data," he said.

Miami flash briefing player embed

What to watch out for

Both Kissler and Toner said that more-infectious variants have thrown a wildcard into the pandemic picture, and without them, we might have expected to see cases wane until enough people have been vaccinated to prevent future outbreaks.

But the viral variants have made that harder to accomplish. Florida has been a national leader in known variant cases, and research at the University of Miami has also revealed concerning mutations.

But South Florida is also making progress with vaccinations. About 80% of people over the age of 65 in Miami-Dade received at least one dose of a ***vaccine***, greatly reducing the pool of those most susceptible to severe illness.

The virus could behave differently in places with lower vaccination rates. A combination of immunity, either from vaccines or prior infection, should help scientists predict how much less severe waves will be in the future, Kissler said.

"If three quarters of people in one group have been vaccinated, we might expect the surge to be at most a quarter as big as it would have been in a totally susceptible population," he said.

It might also help them predict where future outbreaks are likely to occur, something Toner said was already at play in Michigan's ***COVID*** surge. Some of the hot spots in that state are in places where vaccination rates have been lagging, he said.

"The size of these localized outbreaks will get smaller and smaller over time as more people are immune," Toner said.

Not only are the outbreaks likely to get smaller, they're also likely to get slower, said Kissler.

"One of the key things I expect is that delay [between cases and hospitalizations] to grow and be dampened," Kissler said. "It's going to be harder for the virus to pass over into other populations."

Toner agreed. He said he expects to see more of what he called "isolated outbreaks here and there."

"They're not huge, and they don't spread that fast," Toner said. "They are more or less controllable, and that's what success looks like."

**Load-Date:** April 14, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Miami Beach's hottest nightclub is finally reopening. Here's what we know so far*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:62F4-1PD1-JC3J-X2C7-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

April 13, 2021 Tuesday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** miamicom\_nightlife

**Length:** 336 words

**Byline:**  Madeleine Marr

Miami Herald

**Body**

It's go time.

In another sign things are returning back to "normal," Miami Beach's hottest club, LIV, is reopening Friday.

Owner David Grutman announced the big news Monday on social media.

The grand opening weekend at the Fontainebleau Hotel hot spot includes big time performers hitting the DJ booth at LIV, which closed back in March 2020 after the pandemic hit.

liv post

At the time, Grutman released a statement saying he was pausing operations out of an abundance of caution" and "following the guidelines of local and national and international authorities."

The Barstool Sports guy tried this Miami hot spot's pizza. Was it too fancy for him?

Story, Grutman's other nightclub in Miami Beach, remains closed due to the ongoing coronavirus pandemic. But his festive foodie magnet restaurants which include Komodo, Swan Miami and Papi Steak have been up and running for months.

Can these celebs make this South Beach street cool again? Their new hotel is a start

On LIV's website is a picture of Alesso, with the headline, "Together Again." General admission tickets for females start at $250 (male tickets are sold out). A dance floor table at the 18,000 square foot club runs you $15,000; festivities begin at 11 p.m.

On Saturday, house producer duo the Martinez Brothers will make an appearance and Sunday it's "Love & Hip Hop" star DJ Stevie J and rapper Don P.

There are no other events for the month on LIV's calendar.

How late can you stay out? After weeks of wild spring break partying, Miami-Dade County's nightly ***curfew*** ended Monday.

Florida is currently in Phase 3 of its ***COVID*** reopening plans, Gov. Ron DeSantis said back in September.

The Miami Herald reached out to get more details of the reopening and how the venue will be adhering to CDC guidelines, but did not immediately hear back.

Miami-Dade to lift ***COVID***-19 midnight curfewMayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** announced on April 5, 2021, that Miami-Dade County's midnight ***curfew*** will be lifted April 12. It was first imposed in July by then-mayor Carlos Gimenez.

**Load-Date:** April 19, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Heat ending use of vaccinated-only sections and COVID-19-sniffing dogs at AA Arena*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:62F8-1Y81-DYJM-M1PH-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

April 13, 2021 Tuesday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** miami\_heat

**Length:** 472 words

**Byline:**  Anthony Chiang

Miami Herald

**Body**

The Miami Heat has eliminated the use of vaccinated-only sections and ***COVID***-19-sniffing dogs for home games at AmericanAirlines Arena, the Miami Herald confirmed.

The Heat made the vaccinated-only sections available starting April 1, becoming the first team in the NBA to have sections of seats designated for fully vaccinated fans. Fans needed to present proof that they were fully vaccinated with a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) issued ***COVID***-19 vaccination card to sit in the more tightly packed sections.

But communicating the eligibility requirements before and during the point of sale, and then at the gates when fans arrived with the tickets proved to be a complicated process.

Gov. Ron DeSantis issued an executive order on April 2 to prevent Florida businesses from requiring customers to show proof of vaccinations through ***COVID***-19 "passports."

When announcing the implementation of the vaccinated-only sections in March, the Heat said: "The Heat have allocated two sections in the lower level to fully vaccinated fans. These seats will be located in Sections 117-118 and the pods of seats will be separated by just one seat. Fully vaccinated fans will be admitted through a separate gate and will be required to present a proof of a Center for Disease Control (CDC) issued ***COVID***-19 vaccination card showing their vaccination certification dated at least 14 days prior to the game date along with a valid government issued ID."

As for the ***COVID***-19-sniffing dogs that have been used to screen fans and others before entering the arena, those have been in place since the Heat began allowing fans to attend home games this season in late January. If the dog detected ***COVID***-19, that fan and their group were not allowed to enter the arena.

But with the increased number of people getting vaccinated and the widespread availability of the vaccines, the Heat decided to end the use of ***COVID***-19-sniffing dogs. Miami-Dade Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** also recently eased ***COVID***-19 restrictions, including lifting the countywide ***curfew***.

The changes at AmericanAirlines Arena take effect when the Heat returns home to host the Brooklyn Nets on Sunday.

The rest of the ***COVID***-19 health and safety guidelines remain in place for games at AmericanAirlines Arena. That includes a strict masking policy, physical distancing, no food and beverages in the arena bowl, designated eating areas, and hand sanitizing stations.

The number of fans allowed to attend Heat games at AmericanAirlines Arena will remain around 4,000 for now.

Tickets for the Heat's eight remaining regular-season home games will go on sale to the general public on Thursday starting at 2 p.m. on Heat.com, the team announced Tuesday.

For more information on what to expect while attending Heat games at AmericanAirlines Arena, visit Heat.com/FanSafety.

heatcheck2114

**Load-Date:** April 14, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Miami politicians, cruise execs, longshoremen say to CDC: 'Let cruises restart'*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:62DC-GS91-JC3J-X1V4-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

April 9, 2021 Friday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** tourism\_cruises

**Length:** 764 words

**Byline:**  Taylor Dolven

Miami Herald

**Body**

One day after Gov. Ron DeSantis used PortMiaimi as a backdrop to announce he is suing the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to try to invalidate its safety requirements for cruise ships, cruise executives and a long list of Miami politicians gathered at the port for another press conference with a similar message:

Let cruises restart this summer.

Calling the CDC's requirements for cruise companies too onerous, and faulting the agency for not already setting a restart date, U.S. Reps. María Elvira Salazar and Carlos Gimenez, Miami-Dade Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava***, County Commission Chairman Jose "Pepe" Diaz and Commissioner Rebeca Sosa said cruises should be able to welcome passengers by July.

"No other industry is being held back by the federal government like the cruise line industry," said Salazar. "Cruise lines should be allowed to operate if they have proper safety protocols in place. The CEOs and stakeholders of these cruise line industries have said it and repeated it to the CDC that they are ready to implement any ... safety protocols that they require, but that we need to have these ships back into the sea."

Friday's speakers did not address the conflict between some cruise company plans to require vaccinations and a Thursday statement by DeSantis that he will object to such a requirement for sailings from Florida.

The U.S. cruise industry has been paralyzed since mid-March 2020 when it shut down after ***COVID***-19 outbreaks and deaths on multiple ships. Since October, the companies have been testing crew members weekly and reporting data to the CDC to comply with the first phase of the agency's conditional sail order -- a framework to get cruises restarted in the U.S. On Friday, the agency released requirements for the second phase in which companies will have to secure agreements with ports and local health authorities in the cities they plan to visit.

Cruise companies must have the agreements in place before they can move on to test voyages, and then eventually the real thing. CDC spokesperson Caitlin Shockey said instructions for the test voyages are in the works and will be released in the next few weeks.

Echoing comments made by the CDC's maritime division director, Martin Cetron, earlier this week, Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg said Friday he wants to see the cruise industry up and running as soon as possible.

"I certainly care a lot about seeing the cruise sector thrive, and I know that CDC is hopeful that a lot of these operators will be in a position to be sailing by midsummer," he said. "And laying out these specific kind of gates that they need to get through is an important step toward that."

Those gates are exactly what Miami politicians criticized Friday. Salazar called on the CDC to remove its conditional sail order entirely, in line with DeSantis' efforts. Gimenez said the order does not reflect the successful start of ***vaccine*** supply and distribution in the U.S. In its guidance last week, the CDC said it will recommend all passengers and crew be vaccinated, but won't require it.

Cruise executives from Carnival Cruise Line, Royal Caribbean Group, Norwegian Cruise Line Holdings, MSC Cruises and Virgin Voyages joined the press conference. Also there was Torin Ragin, president of the International Longshoremen's Association Local 1416, who represents PortMiami workers who load and unload ships.

Royal Caribbean Group CEO Richard Fain said in an interview that the company hopes for a better dialogue with the CDC.

"We're trying to work our way through it," he said of the agency's conditional sail order. "We'll work with whatever process they want us to. We would just like to have a dialogue as we've had in so many other countries as to what is the best way to protect our citizens."

In a separate interview, Tom McAlpin, CEO of Virgin Voyages, called the CDC's requirement that cruise companies conduct PCR tests on all passengers and crew members on embarkation and debarkation day "practically impossible" given still-lengthy test turnaround times.

The company moved its inaugural ship out of U.S. waters last year and is planning to restart cruises in the United Kingdom in August for fully vaccinated passengers. The new ship will then return to begin cruises from PortMiami in September.

Virgin Voyages, Royal Caribbean Group, Norwegian Cruise Line Holdings, Windstar and Crystal Cruises have announced they will require some or all passengers and crew members to be vaccinated when cruises restart.

McClatchy White House correspondent Francesca Chambers contributed to this report.

**Load-Date:** April 10, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*It's too early for mask burning, Florida. A new 'double mutant' COVID variant is looming | Opinion*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:62D6-5XT1-DYJM-M186-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

April 8, 2021 Thursday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** fabiola\_santiago

**Length:** 825 words

**Byline:**  Fabiola Santiago

Miami Herald

**Body**

The next frontier in the mutating coronavirus pandemic has arrived in Ron DeSantis' wacky Florida.

With vaccinations open to people over 18 -- and the governor who encouraged super-spreader crowds of spring breakers now eager to send everyone cruising -- too many people are shedding their masks and declaring victory over the virus.

In Fort Lauderdale, where the maskless have been packing bars for months despite a ***mask*** mandate being place, a group staged a "***mask*** burning" rally near Las Olas on Saturday.

The "Million Maskless March and ***Mask*** Burning" amounted only to a few loud dozen who burned on a portable barbecue not only masks but also an effigy of the nation's leading infectious disease expert, Dr. Anthony Fauci, calling him a "false prophet."

Fort Lauderdale ***mask***, Fauci effigy burning

In Miami-Dade, Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** lifted the midnight ***curfew*** and whittled down the county's ***COVID***-19 guidelines to almost nothing other than ***mask*** up, social distance and stay home if you're sick.

The mayor said she decided to loosen restrictions with the counsel of Peter G. Paige, executive vice president and chief physician executive at Jackson Health System. But in reality she (and all the state's local leaders) arrived on the job with her hands tied by the business-first, health-second governor.

You can get your lap dances now, guys and gals -- but ***mask*** up.

Miami-Dade lifts ***COVID***-19 restrictions on boats, locker rooms, toothpicks and more

Coronavirus mutations

It's all happening, once again, a bit premature.

Hate to play the party pooper, but here's some news you may not have heard yet: There's a new weird coronavirus mutation in this country.

Reports the Los Angeles Times: "A possibly worrisome variant of the coronavirus first identified in India -- so new that it has no official name -- has been found in California by scientists at Stanford University."

They've nicknamed the variant "double mutant" because it's a two-on-one mutation and it appeared in the San Francisco Bay area -- only one day after it was identified in Mumbai. Dr. Benjamin Pinsky, director of the Clinical Virology Laboratory at Stanford, told the Times: "This rapid spread across the globe is pretty impressive."

How long will it take until the double mutant makes it to South Florida like the British, Brazilian and South African variants?

These mutated strains of ***COVID***-19 have reached at least 41 of Florida's 67 counties, and South Florida is the leader in variant infections, according to data released to the Orlando Sentinel in March by the Florida Department of Health after the newspaper sued.

All it takes is a symptom-less person infected with a variant traveling to the state.

Imagine the multiplied opportunities for infection from all those more highly contagious variants if the infected hop on DeSantis' rushed cruises.

***Vaccine*** passport ban

To make matters worse, from the strip club to the cruise-ship cabin, there won't be any guarantees that fellow partiers or passengers will be vaccinated.

The pro-business governor has prohibited businesses from asking for proof of vaccination.

You can't be asked in Florida to show the so-called "***vaccine*** passport," which amounts to the card we all got from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention after our shots. According to DeSantis, the act of asking for it impinges on Floridians' personal freedoms, which leaves the rest of us with the inalienable right to die from an excessive amount of American foolishness.

So, no, you're not allowed to ask the stripper to show you the card, either.

It's worth noting, however, that it's OK for the Republican National Committee (RNC) to require their wealthy donors to present proof of a negative ***COVID*** test before they're allowed to check in to a spring retreat in Florida this weekend, part of which takes place at Mar-a-Lago.

The rest of us schmucks will just have to wing it and take our chances.

We only have a line of defense: ***Mask*** up and don't listen to the naysayers.

If the mutating coronavirus doesn't motivate you to keep your ***mask*** on, here's another alarming statistic: On Thursday, the day DeSantis filed a frivolous lawsuit against the federal government to force cruise ships to resume sailing immediately, the state reported 7,939 new cases of coronavirus infection -- the most in a single day since Feb. 11.

Some health experts are warning about signs of a fourth surge in the making if people don't vaccinate in large numbers in a timely fashion, if we become lax about wearing a ***mask*** or, if once vaccinated, begin behaving as if the pandemic were over.

Experts also say children must be part of the vaccinated population before the country can return to pre-pandemic life.

Better days are "on the way," Fauci said this week. "Hang in there."

But DeSantis, acting like a stubborn child, says trust him -- and sail!

See what I mean about the extra dose of wackiness in pandemic Florida?

Unlike the St. Johns River, it flows from the top down.

**Load-Date:** April 12, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*40 years later, AIDS still shapes the way we live. This exhibit marks Miami's journey*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:62D2-V7S1-DYJM-M0JD-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

April 8, 2021 Thursday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** visual\_arts

**Length:** 1569 words

**Byline:**  David Brothers

Miami Herald

**Body**

As AIDS hits the 40 year mark since its first case, a new exhibit at Coral Gables Museum reflects on its impact on society through local eyes.

"I had to understand what [my parents] went through, what they were thinking, what they were feeling," said 33-year-old Huston Ochoa, whose family arrived from Cuba.

"A Matter of Time: Examining Forty Years of AIDS while Living Through a Pandemic," which opened Thursday, uses artwork, medical documents and personal memorabilia to explore the cultural, political, scientific and personal impacts of the AIDS epidemic on Miami and the world.

The exhibit was spurred by Ochoa's own quest to understand his family's past. Three years ago, Huston asked his Florida International University professor what AIDS was like in the early 1990s, when the disease infected Huston's parents, Elena Alonso Ochoa and Orson Ochoa, through a blood transfusion and took their lives. His two uncles, Wil and Fernando Brito, were also infected through sexual intercourse and died near the same time. Huston was only 4 years old at the time.

That professor, Shed Boren, remembered the period vividly; a well-known social worker, Boren has been involved with the AIDS epidemic in Miami-Dade for more than 30 years.

Huston's desire to understand what the epidemic felt like led Boren to start working on the exhibit. The result is a portrait of politics, culture and health through historical artifacts, artworks and the personal stories of those affected by AIDS.

AIDS\_Exhibit\_MJO\_2.JPGChief Curator Shed Boren, left, and Huston Ochoa prepare for the opening of BorenÕs exhibit, A Matter of Time: Examining Forty Years of AIDS While Living through a Pandemic, at the Coral Gables Museum in Miami, Florida on Monday, April 5, 2021.

"I didn't really start my relationship with [my parents] until this exhibit," said Ochoa. "It's a process of healing. It's a process of continuing and still growing my relationship with my parents."

Ochoa's parents and two uncles were, in many ways, defined by artworks they created. Ochoa loaned their art and personal items to the exhibit: his uncle's paintings, his dad's Miami baseball shirt from when he arrived from Cuba, and his mom's dress (known among Huston's family) with jewelry made by her cousin, who also died of AIDS through sexual intercourse.

The exhibit includes a quilt that Ochoa's family made after his parents' death. It was one of many made for the AIDS Memorial Quilt -- a 54-ton tapestry in Washington D.C. of more than 48,000 panels dedicated to more than 100,000 people whose lives were lost to AIDS.

MIA\_AIDS\_Exhibit\_MJO\_6A portion of the AIDS Memorial Quilt is on display as part of the exhibit, A Matter of Time: Examining Forty Years of AIDS While Living through a Pandemic, at the Coral Gables Museum in Miami, Florida on Monday, April 5, 2021.

"I want people to realize that we lost some amazing people: Great artists, dancers, writers, journalists, scholars and regular people who were going about their lives," said Boren. "This tells the story of the era - and the story of AIDS. I want to remind us all that they lived - and their lives were meaningful. I want people to realize that life changes on a dime.

"I am a social worker: We are a values-based profession," said Boren. "If we learn the story of someone else, we improve our empathy and our understanding of one another."

The exhibit also explores changes that occurred in public health and clinical medicine as a result of AIDS.

Dr. William Darrow was a research sociologist conducting studies of hepatitis B and other sexually transmitted infections for the Centers for Disease Control when the AIDS epidemic became evident. His work played a key role in demonstrating that HIV, which causes AIDS, could be sexually transmitted. Included in the exhibit are a number of his research documents -- some featured in the movie, "And the Band Played On."

After helping to identify routes of infection, Darrow devoted his career to improving HIV and other disease prevention programs.

Now a professor at FIU, Darrow said that health crises should teach lessons, including the importance of science and the understanding that all knowledge is temporary.

His pioneering AIDS-era work in contact tracing is used today globally to trace the transmission of the novel coronavirus. The HIV discovery effort laid the foundation for the ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine***.

"These pandemics that have faced humans through the centuries have many things in common, and yet each one is unique. Each one is distinct," said Darrow. "If it weren't for the scientific work that was done over the past 50 years, we still wouldn't know about viruses."

AIDS\_Exhibit\_MJO\_11.JPGA basketball signed by former NBA player Magic Johnson is on display as part of the exhibit, A Matter of Time: Examining Forty Years of AIDS While Living through a Pandemic, at the Coral Gables Museum in Miami, Florida on Monday, April 5, 2021.

Boren recalls Darrow's earlier work. "He was asking a lot of very personal, invasive questions," said Boren. "These men wanted to help, and they answered. The exhibit includes documents from gay men in 1981, saying, 'here are the people I had sex with (I hope you don't judge me). Here are their names and numbers. I hope that this helps you understand what is happening.' They spoke out of fear, and they contributed."

As with ***COVID***-19, AIDS' impact on marginalized communities sparked debate around the "traditional values'' and in turn forced many to confront stigmas and misconceptions about the LGBTQ+ community and other groups. Boren was part of that change in Miami, and he brought many of the paintings, protests signs, photographs, and unique objects with a cultural significance form the period -- Including a signed basketball by legend Magic Johnson, who publicly declared he he was HIV positive in 1991.

AIDS\_Exhibit\_MJO\_10.JPGVarious condom packages with messages are on display as part of the exhibit, A Matter of Time: Examining Forty Years of AIDS While Living through a Pandemic, at the Coral Gables Museum in Miami, Florida on Monday, April 5, 2021.

In the early 1980s, Boren hosted the Gay and Lesbian Health Conference at the Miami Beach Convention Center when AIDS was still a mystery to many. There, new concepts that seem obvious in today's health system were established.

"People with HIV adopted what is called the Denver Principles. They weren't victims or patients with a disease. They were people living with HIV," said Boren. "Yes, this is language, but it shaped the expectations. This change benefits all of us today -- as doctor-patient collaboration has replaced the doctor's dictates of yesterday. We now have conversations with our medical providers."

Another figure spreading AIDs awareness at the time was Miami-Dade County Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava***, who then was an attorney for the Legal Services of Greater Miami and represented three girls with HIV who were denied entrance to school. Levine Cava filed a class action lawsuit with the support of the ACLU that allowed the girls to go back to school.

"There were many people fearful about this disease -- a lack of understanding," said Cava. "It was a community of people who were fighting for the rights of these folks, as well as to educate the community about the disease and about prevention. I was very proud to be able to represent these children, and to help them have some normalcy in their lives."

Mayor Cava said she is excited that the exhibit is bringing these stories back, and she hopes it will raise awareness about HIV prevention. Miami-Dade still has some of the nation's highest numbers, with 1,194 new cases in 2018.

For Ochoa, now a social worker, the exhibit has strengthened his bond with his late parents, seen here in a video as they crafted their own AIDS quilt memorial.

"I thought I had normalized the feelings around [their death,] said Ochoa. "I thought maybe there was even closure."

"But it's amazing how no matter how many times you revisit it, you get more meaning out of it. You still feel closer and more connected to it. And so for me, it was a beautiful process. To see their quilt unfolding in front of me was like they were speaking to me, no way around."

AIDS\_Exhibit\_MJO\_3.JPGHuston Ochoa, 33, looks at a quilt panel his family made which is part of the AIDS Memorial Quilt that is on display as part of the exhibit, A Matter of Time: Examining Forty Years of AIDS While Living through a Pandemic, at the Coral Gables Museum in Miami, Florida on Monday, April 5, 2021. OchoaÕs family made the quilt panel in honor of his mother and father who both died of AIDS when he was a young boy.

IF YOU GO

What: "A Matter of Time: Examining Forty Years of AIDS while Living Through a Pandemic"

Where: Coral Gables Museum, 285 Aragon Ave.

When: Through July 18

Cost: Adults: $10; seniors and students, $8; ages 6-12, $5; 5 and under free. Thursdays from 5 p.m., the museum will offer free admission.

Lecture series: Each Thursday night, the museum will host a free lecture at 6 p.m. followed by a panel discussion at 7:30 pm. The first, on April 15, will be "AIDS Chaplain: One Man's Journey;" Father Jerry Anderson, retired priest from Trinity Cathedral, will discuss his experiences as a chaplain during the AIDS crisis. At 7:30PM there will be an interfaith discussion about the roles that the faith community played in the early epidemic.

Information: coralgablesmuseum.org; 305-603-8067

**Load-Date:** April 9, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Has your trash collection been late in Coral Gables? This may be why*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:62CY-JC81-JC3J-X3W6-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

April 7, 2021 Wednesday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** coral\_gables

**Length:** 678 words

**Byline:**  Samantha J. Gross

Miami Herald

**Body**

***COVID***-19 infections among sanitation workers across Miami-Dade County have led to a delay in service at some businesses, apartments and condo buildings in Coral Gables in recent weeks, according to the city and contractor Waste Management.

Spokespersons for Coral Gables and the company say the city's biweekly trash collection was pushed back after two Waste Management crews were sidelined due to coronavirus infections and exposure, causing some backup in service.

The contract workers handle garbage and recycling for all commercial and multi-family residential properties in the city. Waste Management does not handle any single-family homes in the City of Coral Gables.

On Wednesday, Waste Management spokeswoman Dawn McCormick said Coral Gables was the only city affected by the most recent infections, but did not disclose how many workers were out sick.

"We regrettably have had some service delays in Coral Gables over the past few weeks," she wrote in an email. "We are working diligently to catch up and expect to do so by the end of this week."

Coral Gables spokeswoman Martha Pantin told the Miami Herald that Waste Management is responsible for two of seven total routes in the city for garbage pickup. Pantin said because there were coronavirus-related issues throughout the company's 15 county-wide routes, they were unable to reallocate resources to help out Coral Gables.

Affected residents were mostly concentrated in the north part of the city, as well as on Edgewater Drive, in Deering Bay and in commercial buildings in the south part of the city, Pantin wrote in an email.

"Obviously it's something we immediately checked in on, worked with them and we look forward to returning to normal," she said.

To catch up, Waste Management workers have increased service on the two affected routes, according to Pantin, who said service should be back to normal by the end of the week.

She said throughout the pandemic, Waste Management has experienced issues with drivers throughout the county due to the virus. Increased workload has also been a complication: During the pandemic, for example, the Gables saw an 11% increase in garbage, a strain exacerbated further when staff is out due to ***COVID***.

Waste Management has endured past outbreaks in Florida: At a Brevard County Commission meeting in July, a Waste Management public affairs manager said a summer spike in ***COVID***-19 cases significantly impacted their workforce statewide. At one point, 69 Waste Management drivers were not working because of coronavirus infections, the representative said.

McCormick wrote in an email that there have been impacts on "a small portion of our Miami-Dade County team members." She did not answer questions regarding the length or the extent of the delay, how many residents were affected or what the quarantine rules are for Waste Management employees.

Coral Gables has been contracting with Waste Management since January 2011.

While Waste Management contracts with Coral Gables for trash pickup on commercial and multi-family properties, other residences are serviced by city sanitation employees, which had ***COVID***-19-related problems of their own earlier this year. Last month, the city notified residents via email that its own sanitation division has been understaffed due to ***COVID***-19 infections, which sometimes required quarantining the entire crew for seven days. At one point, about one-third of its employees were sick.

The city's ***COVID***-19 policy maintains that employees who test positive for ***COVID***-19 may come back to work upon a negative test or at least 10 days after the onset of symptoms.

The infections among Waste Management workers come as Miami-Dade County Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** has loosened ***COVID*** restrictions and prepared to lift a countywide midnight ***curfew*** at 12:01 a.m. on April 12. Levine Cava cited declining hospitalizations and deaths, and the increasing availability of vaccines Monday in announcing her decision.

The county on Wednesday reported 1,060 new cases and six new deaths, putting its pandemic totals at 454,405 cases and 5,930 deaths.

**Load-Date:** April 7, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*COVID vaccine live updates: What you should know in South Florida on Wednesday, April 7*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:62CT-JC11-DYJM-M369-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

April 7, 2021 Wednesday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** coronavirus

**Length:** 2377 words

**Byline:**  Michelle Marchante and Howard Cohen

Miami Herald

**Body**

***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** rules can be confusing in South Florida. Here's the latest news on where shots are available and who is eligible:

What's new today?

A Hialeah walk-up ***COVID vaccine*** site goes from pop-up to open for two weeks at Babcock Park, 651 E. Fourth Ave. First shots only for now. Will convert to second doses later. Starting with Moderna through Sunday, April 11. Then Pfizer. Walk up site, no appointments necessary.

FEMA pop-ups moving to Liberty City and Cutler Bay again -- this time for second doses only. These sites don't require an appointment and are currently at Allen Park Community Center at 1770 NE 162nd St. in North Miami Beach and at the Miami Springs Community Center at 1401 Westward Dr. through 5 p.m. Wednesday, April 7.

Then on Thursday, April 8, they open at Charles Hadley Park, 1350 NW 50th St. in Liberty City and at South Miami-Dade Cultural Arts Center, 10950 SW 211th St. in Cutler Bay. They will be open 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. through April 13 (Cutler Bay's won't be open on Sunday, April 11) then the pop-ups end their run.

The main Miami Dade North FEMA site is offering only second Pfizer doses and single-dose Johnson & Johnson and ceases operation on May 26.

Inter Miami players get ***COVID***-19 vaccinesInter Miami on Monday became one of the first American professional sports teams to get its players vaccinated. Players got their first doses of the ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** at the team's stadium, a vaccination site.

People 18 and older can now schedule a J&J vaccination at Publix stores in Florida. The online portal opened at 7 a.m. Wednesday and will remain open until all appointments are full. If you missed your shot, you can try again on Friday, when Moderna appointments open.

Do you still need to wear a ***mask*** at Disney World? Yes, but there are some changes happening at the Happiest Place on Earth. Starting Thursday, visitors at Walt Disney World Resort in Orlando can remove their masks to take outdoor photos, though it comes with a few rules.

Salad bars are legal again in Miami-Dade. County Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** signed a new order, which went into effect Tuesday night, ending many of the complex rules found in Miami-Dade's 197-page "New Normal" rule book, including some boat and restaurant restrictions. Masks are still required.

Doug tweet

Having trouble getting a ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** appointment in South Florida? We have a list of sites in Miami-Dade and Broward that don't take appointments, so you can show up and wait in line.

Florida ***COVID*** update for Wednesday: 5,885 new cases, 42 deaths as positivity bumps up

Who can get ***COVID***-19 vaccines in Florida and who can't? Do you need proof of residency?

People 16 and older can get Pfizer's ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** in Florida. People 18 and older can get Pfizer, Moderna and Johnson & Johnson's ***vaccine***.

Only Florida residents and snowbirds can get the ***vaccine***, but there is no county residency requirement in place. That means that if you live in Miami-Dade, you can get the ***vaccine*** in Broward, or vice versa. You will need to show proof of Florida residency.

Teens 16 and 17 will need to have a parent or legal guardian with them the day of their vaccination along with documents that show proof of their age, such as their birth certificate or a current passport. Requirements may differ by site. Families also need to fill out a screening and consent form.

For snowbirds or part-time residents, the proof needs to be in the form of two documents such as a lease agreement and a utility bill no more than two months old, according to the Florida Division of Emergency Management.

Anyone else who lives in another state or country can no longer get the ***vaccine*** in Florida. Nonresidents who have already received the first dose in Florida will still be able to get the second dose.

The change was made to curb ***vaccine*** tourism, or people who travel from another state or country to get the ***vaccine*** in Miami or another part of the state.

Who should not get a ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine***?

People who have had a severe allergic reaction to ingredients in the ***vaccine*** or had a severe reaction after a previous dose. Ingredients of the Pfizer-BioNTech ***vaccine***, the Moderna ***vaccine*** and the Johnson & Johnson ***vaccine*** can be found on FDA.gov.

How many people have received the ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** in Florida?

According to Wednesday's ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** report, 332,300 people in Florida have completed the Johnson & Johnson single dose ***vaccine*** and 3,581,950 people have completed the two-dose series of either Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna vaccines.

Of those who have been fully vaccinated, 501,599 were Miami-Dade residents, 342,396 were Broward residents, 308,266 were Palm Beach residents and 14,527 were Monroe residents.

What ***COVID***-19 vaccines are available in Florida? How many doses do I need?

Florida has three vaccines available: Pfizer-BioNTech, Moderna and Johnson & Johnson.

The Pfizer ***vaccine*** requires two shots, three weeks apart, and can be given to people 16 and older. Moderna's ***vaccine*** requires two shots, one month apart, and can be given to people 18 and older. Johnson & Johnson's is a single dose and can be given to people 18 and older.

The Pfizer and Moderna vaccines are not interchangeable, however, which means that if your first shot was the Pfizer ***vaccine***, your second shot cannot be the Moderna ***vaccine***, according to the CDC.

***COVID***-19 vaccination sites in South Florida?

Pharmacies:

The following pharmacies offer ***COVID***-19 vaccines in select stores by appointment-only:

Publix stores in Florida offer vaccines. To check for a slot, visit publix.com/***covid-vaccine***/florida.

Navarro Discount Pharmacies and CVS y mas stores in Miami-Dade. Some traditional CVS stores across Florida also have doses. To check for availability, visit CVS.com or call customer service at 800-746-7287.

Some Winn-Dixie and Fresco y Mas stores offer vaccines in South Florida. For Winn-Dixie, visit winndixie.com/pharmacy/***covid-vaccine***. For Fresco y Mas, visit frescoymas.com/pharmacy/***covid-vaccine***.

Some Walmart and Sam's Club stores offer vaccines, including in Broward and Miami-Dade counties. To schedule a ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** appointment at Walmart, visit walmart.com/COVIDvaccine. For Sam's Clubs, visit samsclub.com/***covid***.

Some Walgreens stores offer vaccines. To check for availability visit [*https://www.walgreens.com/topic/promotion/****covid-vaccine****.jsp*](https://www.walgreens.com/topic/promotion/covid-vaccine.jsp)

Federally supported site in Miami-Dade

Miami Dade College North campus is the first federally supported vaccination site to open in South Florida. Appointments are not required and walk-ins are welcome. The site is open every day from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. and is a walk-up, which means people wait in line instead of in their car.

Anyone who lives in Florida and is at least 18 can get the Johnson & Johnson ***vaccine*** at MDC North. The site will no longer offer the first dose of the Pfizer ***vaccine***. Those who have already gotten their first dose of Pfizer will still be able to get their second shot at MDC North.

The FEMA pop-up sites are at Allen Park Community Center at 1770 NE 162nd St. in North Miami Beach and at the Miami Springs Community Center at 1401 Westward Dr. through April 7 and appointments are not needed. The pop-ups are open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and are only offering second dose Pfizer shots.

Preregister for an appointment in Miami-Dade and Broward counties

You can preregister for an appointment in Florida through a statewide website and phone system.

The website is myvaccine.fl.gov. You can also pre-register by phone. To find the designated number for your county, visit floridahealthcovid19.gov.

Anyone who preregisters for a ***vaccine*** appointment will be notified once they're eligible and a slot becomes available at state-supported or federally supported vaccination sites in their county, according to the Florida Division of Emergency Management, which is tasked with the state's ***vaccine*** distribution.

Many of the state-run sites offer Pfizer, which means people 16 and older are eligible for a shot. Once you get an appointment, you will need to show proof that you are a Florida resident.

State-run sites in Miami-Dade County include Hard Rock Stadium in Miami Gardens and loanDepot park (formerly Marlins Park) in Little Havana.

State-run sites in Broward County include Snyder Park in Fort Lauderdale, Coral Square Mall in Coral Springs, Markham Park in Sunrise, Tree Tops Park in Davie, Trade Winds Park in Coconut Creek and Central Regional Park in Lauderhill, TY Park in Hollywood and Pompano City Centre in Pompano Beach.

Remember, teens 16 and 17-years-old will need to have a parent or legal guardian with them the day of their vaccination and have the state's ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** screening and consent form. The form can be downloaded at floridahealthcovid19.gov.

Hospitals and other ***COVID***-19 vaccination sites in Miami-Dade, Broward

Miami-Dade County:

The county has a website, miamidade.gov/***vaccine***, where it posts updates on where people can find and schedule ***COVID***-19 vaccination appointments.

County-run sites include Zoo Miami, Tropical Park and the Homestead Sports Complex. The sites sometimes carry Pfizer and other times the sites have Moderna in stock.

You can preregister for an appointment through the online portal or by calling 305-614-2014. Once an appointment becomes available, you will be contacted.

Here are other places that have vaccines. Some locations may be vaccinating specific groups from Florida's priority list so check the location's website for details.

The City of Opa-locka ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** site is at the Helen Miller Center, 2331 NW 143rd St. The site is open every day from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. Appointments are not required but pre-registration is recommended. To pre-register, visit Commvax.patientportalfl.com.

Bucky Dent Park, 2250 W. 60th St., in Hialeah. Anyone who meets Florida's ***vaccine*** criteria can get a shot here. No appointments are needed. You will wait standing in line, instead of in your car. The site is open daily from 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. or until supplies run out.

Hialeah residents who are unable to leave their homes can call 305-863-2955 to schedule a homebound vaccination.

Overtown Youth Center, 1551 NW First Ave, is open from 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.. The state-run site does not require appointments. You will wait standing in line, instead of in your car. You must fall into one of Florida's priority groups to get the ***vaccine***.

Oak Grove Park, 690 NE 159th St. is open from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. The state-run site does not require appointments. You will wait standing in line, instead of in your car. You must fall into one of Florida's priority groups to get the ***vaccine***.

Homebound seniors can email their name and phone number to [*HomeboundVaccine@em.myflorida.com*](mailto:HomeboundVaccine@em.myflorida.com) and someone will get back to you about setting up an appointment. You can also call 866-779-6121 to schedule an appointment.

Jackson Health System, the county's public hospital network. To check for available appointments, visit [*https://jhsmiami.org/comvac/*](https://jhsmiami.org/comvac/).

Mount Sinai Medical Center in Miami Beach schedules appointments online. To check for updates, visit msmc.com/coronavirus-update/

Baptist Health is one of the county's largest private hospitals. To check for updates, visit Baptisthealth.net/***vaccine***.

Seniors who seek care with Leon Medical Centers can call customer service at 305-642-5366 to schedule a free ***COVID***-19 vaccination appointment. If you need transportation, let the operator know so they can also schedule a driver to pick you up. Appointments will be scheduled until Leon runs out of vaccines.

Nicklaus Children's Hospital is offering vaccines to young adults ages 16 to 21. To check for slots, visit Nicklauschildrens.org/Covid19Vaccine.

All veterans in Miami-Dade, Broward and Monroe counties who are patients of the Miami VA Healthcare System can get the ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine***. You must be enrolled and eligible for VA healthcare benefits. Some of the sites require appointments, other locations accept walk-ins. Veterans who want to make an appointment can call 305-575-7000 or contact their care team. To learn more, visit [*https://www.miami.va.gov/services/****covid****-19-vaccines.asp*](https://www.miami.va.gov/services/covid-19-vaccines.asp)

Broward County:

Holy Cross Health in Fort Lauderdale is offering ***COVID***-19 vaccines to teens 16-and-17 years old who have certain medical conditions that make them at risk for severe ***COVID*** complications. Priority will be given to Holy Cross Medical Group patients, the hospital said. For details on how to request an appointment, visit [*www.holy-cross.com/covidvaccine*](http://www.holy-cross.com/covidvaccine).

Broward Health, to check for appointments, visit [*https://www.browardhealth.org/pages/being-healthy-****vaccine***](https://www.browardhealth.org/pages/being-healthy-vaccine)

Fort Lauderdale's Inter Miami CF Stadium is a ***COVID***-19 vaccination site. Appointments for this site are also booked through BrowardHealth.org

Memorial Healthcare System ran out of ***COVID***-19 vaccines. Once doses are available again, appointments can be made through the MyChart portal, [*https://mychart.mhs.net*](https://mychart.mhs.net) for current Memorial Healthcare patients. Others will have to call 954-276-4340.

The appointment-only ***vaccine*** locations listed in the website above are:

The Memorial Regional Conference Center, 3501 Johnson St. in Hollywood, noon to 7:30 p.m. Mondays, 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Tuesday through Friday.

Memorial Specialty Pharmacy, 9581 Premier Pkwy. in Miramar, 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Monday through Saturday.

Certain high-risk 16- and 17-year-old patients at Joe DiMaggio Children's Hospital may also be eligible for the ***vaccine***. Appointments can be scheduled through their MyChart account.

All Cleveland Clinic Florida locations, including its Weston campus, schedule appointments for patient who have seen a Cleveland Clinic Florida provider in the last two years for outpatient or inpatient care. For eligibility criteria and how to check for appointments, visit [*https://my.clevelandclinic.org/landing/****covid****-19-****vaccine****/florida*](https://my.clevelandclinic.org/landing/covid-19-vaccine/florida)

***COVID***-19 vaccines in Monroe County?

More places are offering the ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** in the Florida Keys.

Eligible Florida residents can now get vaccinated at Winn-Dixie stores in Key West and Tavernier, and at all Publix stores along the island chain. Appointments are required.

For Winn-Dixie, check [*https://www.winndixie.com/pharmacy/****covid-vaccine***](https://www.winndixie.com/pharmacy/covid-vaccine). For Publix, check [*https://www.publix.com/****covid-vaccine****/florida*](https://www.publix.com/covid-vaccine/florida).

**Load-Date:** April 8, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Miami-Dade lifts COVID-19 restrictions on boats, locker rooms, toothpicks and more*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:62CS-7HN1-DYJM-M2JY-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

April 6, 2021 Tuesday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** miami\_dade

**Length:** 998 words

**Byline:**  Douglas Hanks

Miami Herald

**Body**

Miami-Dade County has dropped its complex emergency rule book on ***COVID***-19 and replaced it with general regulations on masks and spacing, leaving only a few restrictions in place targeting specific industries or leisure activities.

A new order from Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** that took effect 6 p.m. Tuesday cancels eight previous orders implemented last year by her predecessor, Carlos Gimenez. That includes canceling the entire "New Normal" rule book, a 197-page manual released in May that laid out ***COVID*** emergency requirements for dozens of industries, as well as recommended best practices for keeping customers and employees safe.

Are lap dances now legal in Miami-Dade?

Among the former rules quashed: a ban on boats rafting up with each other; a requirement that gym locker rooms be closed; prohibitions on water stations at golf courses; and a string of restaurant regulations outlawing salad bars, toothpick dispensers, and loud music.

Also gone: specific rules requiring 10 feet between customers and performers, a regulation designed to ban lap dances at strip clubs.

Levine Cava's new order restates the county's ***mask*** requirement for almost all public spaces, with existing exceptions for religious institutions, hotel rooms, private automobiles and other circumstances. It also requires businesses to provide hand sanitizer for employees and customers, and mandates they make "reasonable efforts" to maintain social distancing.

What are Miami-Dade's new ***COVID*** restaurant rules?

The order includes more specific mandates for spacing in restaurants, allowing dining rooms to operate at 100% capacity only if tables are placed six feet apart. That restates an existing county emergency rule, but drops the prior caps on how many unrelated people could sit at a table.

"It's a significant change," said Julio Barrero, owner of the Trigo Cafe in Hialeah.

He said business has been picking up at Trigo, a sign to Barrero that customers are feeling more confident at the restaurant's ability to maintain reasonable precautions against ***COVID*** spread.

MIA\_02GIMENEZ\_MASKORDERPRESSER\_CPJMiami-Dade County Mayor Carlos Gimenez speaks at a press conference on July 2, 2020, announcing that a team of ***mask*** distributors supported by the county and members of the Community Youth Against Violence will hand out masks to assure that county residents wear them outside their homes. On July 6, 2020, he announced restaurants would be closing dining rooms again.

Trigo staff disinfect tables after each use, and the restaurant removed two of its 10 tables to increase space between diners. Barrero bought plastic barriers to separate his eight tables in March 2020, a feature never required by government restrictions but which he said "gave a sense of security to the customers."

Restaurants across Miami-Dade still face mandatory closure times at midnight, the result of a ***curfew*** that's been in place since July. Levine Cava announced Monday that the ***curfew*** will end this week, and restrictions lifted at 12:01 a.m. on Monday, April 12.

What are the ***COVID*** Airbnb rules in Miami-Dade?

Outside of restaurant capacity restrictions, the Levine Cava order maintains one industry-specific rule. Across Miami-Dade, short-term vacation rentals still have capacity caps at between four and 10 people, depending on the property's size.

The order restates existing rules limiting Airbnb and other short-term rentals to two people for each bedroom on a property, plus an additional two people; maxing out at 10 occupants, no matter the size.

The rules for short-term rentals -- a source of friction during the ***COVID***-19 pandemic for their popularity with party hosts while nightclubs were shut down or restricted -- were the exception in the Levine Cava order, which mostly dispatched with existing rules.

What are the ***COVID*** boating rules in Miami-Dade?

That included eliminating every rule specific to boats in Miami-Dade. For more than a year, Miami-Dade prohibited boats from rafting up or anchoring within 50 feet of each other. The county imposed capacity restrictions on private boats based on size, barred multiple people using the same fish-cleaning station at the same time and outlawed vessels from beaching on sandbars.

Her order also eliminates detailed regulations on team sports and athletic facilities. A rule that was still on the books through the New Normal regulations barred the use of locker rooms at gyms.

An order on recreational activities revised by Gimenez in October required golf courses to remove water stations from courses and lock down self-service machines for washing golf balls. The order also barred use of bleachers for sporting events at city and county parks and required cleaning attendants to sanitize every park bathroom at least once every two hours.

Rachel Johnson, communications director for Levine Cava, on Tuesday provided a list of four orders that remain in effect, along with the new umbrella ***COVID*** order the mayor announced Monday and the ***curfew*** order that's set to end early Monday morning.

Three of the remaining orders govern reporting requirements for hospitals and ***vaccine*** providers as it relates to ***COVID*** cases and ***vaccine*** administration. The fourth is an order first issued in March 2020 that allowed Miami-Dade to suspend its normal building inspection and permitting services, requiring much of the work to continue online.

Levine Cava's order includes a new document that is a condensed version of the "New Normal" protocols. Now called the "New Normal Handbook," the 20-page document includes more detailed prescriptions for how businesses should operate during the ***COVID***-19 pandemic. But unlike the prior New Normal iteration, this one only includes suggestions and does not carry the force of law.

"The guidelines are just guidelines [with] specific recommendations to help residents and businesses stay safe," Johnson said. "What is required is what's laid out in the order."

Miami Herald staff writer Michelle Marchante contributed to this report.

**Load-Date:** April 7, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*COVID vaccine live updates: What you should know in South Florida on Tuesday, April 6*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:62CK-K2V1-JC3J-X18K-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

April 6, 2021 Tuesday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** coronavirus

**Length:** 2205 words

**Byline:**  Michelle Marchante

Miami Herald

**Body**

***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** rules can be confusing in South Florida. Here's the latest news on where shots are available and who is eligible:

What's new today?

Having trouble getting a ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** appointment in South Florida? We have a list of sites in Miami-Dade and Broward that don't take appointments, so you can show up and wait in line.

Miami Beach Mayor Dan Gelber wants the city commission to consider a ***COVID***-related ***curfew*** ahead of the May 31 holiday -- even though Miami-Dade County is lifting its midnight ***curfew*** April 12.

The federally supported ***vaccine*** site at Miami Dade College North campus has Johnson & Johnson vaccines in stock again. It has also stopped offering first-dose Pfizer shots. Second-dose Pfizer shots are still available.

Inter Miami players have received their first doses of the ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** at the Inter Miami CF Stadium vaccination site in Fort Lauderdale. Players will receive the second dose in the coming weeks.

You'll soon have to pay fares again on Miami-Dade's buses and Metrorail. The county is planning to resume charging passenger transit fares again on June 1 now that more ***COVID***-19 safety measures are in place and people are getting vaccinated. Transit has been free in Miami-Dade during the pandemic since March 2020.

Miami-Dade County's midnight ***curfew*** will be lifted the night of April 12, Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** announced.

Who can get ***COVID***-19 vaccines in Florida and who can't? Do you need proof of residency?

People 16 and older can get Pfizer's ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** in Florida. People 18 and older can get Pfizer, Moderna and Johnson & Johnson's ***vaccine***.

Only Florida residents and snowbirds can get the ***vaccine***, but there is no county residency requirement in place. That means that if you live in Miami-Dade, you can get the ***vaccine*** in Broward, or vice versa. You will need to show proof of Florida residency.

Teens 16 and 17 will need to have a parent or legal guardian with them the day of their vaccination along with documents that show proof of their age, such as their birth certificate or a current passport. Requirements may differ by site. Families also need to fill out a screening and consent form.

For snowbirds or part-time residents, the proof needs to be in the form of two documents such as a lease agreement and a utility bill no more than two months old, according to the Florida Division of Emergency Management.

Anyone else who lives in another state or country can no longer get the ***vaccine*** in Florida. Nonresidents who have already received the first dose in Florida will still be able to get the second dose.

The change was made to curb ***vaccine*** tourism, or people who travel from another state or country to get the ***vaccine*** in Miami or another part of the state.

Who should not get a ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine***?

People who have had a severe allergic reaction to ingredients in the ***vaccine*** or had a severe reaction after a previous dose. Ingredients of the Pfizer-BioNTech ***vaccine***, the Moderna ***vaccine*** and the Johnson & Johnson ***vaccine*** can be found on FDA.gov.

How many people have received the ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** in Florida?

According to Monday's ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** report, 273,169 people in Florida have completed the Johnson & Johnson single dose ***vaccine*** and 3,413,011 people have completed the two-dose series of either Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna vaccines.

Of those who have been fully vaccinated, 465,779 were Miami-Dade residents, 322,157 were Broward residents, 295,815 were Palm Beach residents and 13,712 were Monroe residents.

What ***COVID***-19 vaccines are available in Florida? How many doses do I need?

Florida has three vaccines available: Pfizer-BioNTech, Moderna and Johnson & Johnson.

The Pfizer ***vaccine*** requires two shots, three weeks apart, and can be given to people 16 and older. Moderna's ***vaccine*** requires two shots, one month apart, and can be given to people 18 and older. Johnson & Johnson's is a single dose and can be given to people 18 and older.

The Pfizer and Moderna vaccines are not interchangeable, however, which means that if your first shot was the Pfizer ***vaccine***, your second shot cannot be the Moderna ***vaccine***, according to the CDC.

***COVID***-19 vaccination sites in South Florida?

Pharmacies:

The following pharmacies offer ***COVID***-19 vaccines in select stores by appointment-only:

Publix stores in Florida offer vaccines. To check for a slot, visit publix.com/***covid-vaccine***/florida.

Navarro Discount Pharmacies and CVS y mas stores in Miami-Dade. Some traditional CVS stores across Florida also have doses. To check for availability, visit CVS.com or call customer service at 800-746-7287.

Some Winn-Dixie and Fresco y Mas stores offer vaccines in South Florida. For Winn-Dixie, visit winndixie.com/pharmacy/***covid-vaccine***. For Fresco y Mas, visit frescoymas.com/pharmacy/***covid-vaccine***.

Some Walmart and Sam's Club stores offer vaccines, including in Broward and Miami-Dade counties. To schedule a ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** appointment at Walmart, visit walmart.com/COVIDvaccine. For Sam's Clubs, visit samsclub.com/***covid***.

Some Walgreens stores offer vaccines. To check for availability visit [*https://www.walgreens.com/topic/promotion/****covid-vaccine****.jsp*](https://www.walgreens.com/topic/promotion/covid-vaccine.jsp)

Federally supported site in Miami-Dade

Miami Dade College North campus is the first federally supported vaccination site to open in South Florida. Appointments are not required and walk-ins are welcome. The site is open every day from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. and is a walk-up, which means people wait in line instead of in their car.

Anyone who lives in Florida and is at least 18 can get the Johnson & Johnson ***vaccine*** at MDC North. The site will no longer offer the first dose of the Pfizer ***vaccine***. Those who have already gotten their first dose of Pfizer will still be able to get their second shot at MDC North.

The FEMA pop-up sites are at Allen Park Community Center at 1770 NE 162nd St. in North Miami Beach and at the Miami Springs Community Center at 1401 Westward Dr. through April 7 and appointments are not needed. The pop-ups are open from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. and are only offering second dose Pfizer shots.

MDC North will stop offering first dose Pfizer shots and only offer second doses of the Pfizer ***vaccine*** and the single dose J&J shot starting Tuesday, April 6.

Preregister for an appointment in Miami-Dade and Broward counties

You can preregister for an appointment in Florida through a statewide website and phone system.

The website is myvaccine.fl.gov. You can also pre-register by phone. To find the designated number for your county, visit floridahealthcovid19.gov.

Anyone who preregisters for a ***vaccine*** appointment will be notified once they're eligible and a slot becomes available at state-supported or federally supported vaccination sites in their county, according to the Florida Division of Emergency Management, which is tasked with the state's ***vaccine*** distribution.

Many of the state-run sites offer Pfizer, which means people 16 and older are eligible for a shot. Once you get an appointment, you will need to show proof that you are a Florida resident.

State-run sites in Miami-Dade County include Hard Rock Stadium in Miami Gardens and loanDepot park (formerly Marlins Park) in Little Havana.

State-run sites in Broward County include Snyder Park in Fort Lauderdale, Coral Square Mall in Coral Springs, Markham Park in Sunrise, Tree Tops Park in Davie, Trade Winds Park in Coconut Creek and Central Regional Park in Lauderhill, TY Park in Hollywood and Pompano City Centre in Pompano Beach.

Remember, teens 16 and 17-years-old will need to have a parent or legal guardian with them the day of their vaccination and have the state's ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** screening and consent form. The form can be downloaded at floridahealthcovid19.gov.

Hospitals and other ***COVID***-19 vaccination sites in Miami-Dade, Broward

Miami-Dade County:

The county has a website, miamidade.gov/***vaccine***, where it posts updates on where people can find and schedule ***COVID***-19 vaccination appointments.

County-run sites include Zoo Miami, Tropical Park and the Homestead Sports Complex. The sites sometimes carry Pfizer and other times the sites have Moderna in stock.

You can preregister for an appointment through the online portal or by calling 305-614-2014. Once an appointment becomes available, you will be contacted.

Here are other places that have vaccines. Some locations may be vaccinating specific groups from Florida's priority list so check the location's website for details.

The City of Opa-locka ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** site is at the Helen Miller Center, 2331 NW 143rd St.. The site is open every day from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. Appointments are not required but pre-registration is recommended. To pre-register, visit Commvax.patientportalfl.com.

Bucky Dent Park, 2250 W. 60th St., in Hialeah. Anyone who meets Florida's ***vaccine*** criteria can get a shot here. No appointments are needed. You will wait standing in line, instead of in your car. The site is open daily from 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. or until supplies run out.

Hialeah residents who are unable to leave their homes can call 305-863-2955 to schedule a homebound vaccination.

Overtown Youth Center, 1551 NW First Ave, is open from 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.. The state-run site does not require appointments. You will wait standing in line, instead of in your car. You must fall into one of Florida's priority groups to get the ***vaccine***.

Oak Grove Park, 690 NE 159th St. is open from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. The state-run site does not require appointments. You will wait standing in line, instead of in your car. You must fall into one of Florida's priority groups to get the ***vaccine***.

Homebound seniors can email their name and phone number to [*HomeboundVaccine@em.myflorida.com*](mailto:HomeboundVaccine@em.myflorida.com) and someone will get back to you about setting up an appointment. You can also call 866-779-6121 to schedule an appointment.

Jackson Health System, the county's public hospital network. To check for available appointments, visit [*https://jhsmiami.org/comvac/*](https://jhsmiami.org/comvac/).

Mount Sinai Medical Center in Miami Beach schedules appointments online. To check for updates, visit msmc.com/coronavirus-update/

Baptist Health is one of the county's largest private hospitals. To check for updates, visit Baptisthealth.net/***vaccine***.

Seniors who seek care with Leon Medical Centers can call customer service at 305-642-5366 to schedule a free ***COVID***-19 vaccination appointment. If you need transportation, let the operator know so they can also schedule a driver to pick you up. Appointments will be scheduled until Leon runs out of vaccines.

Nicklaus Children's Hospital is offering vaccines to young adults ages 16 to 21. To check for slots, visit Nicklauschildrens.org/Covid19Vaccine.

All veterans in Miami-Dade, Broward and Monroe counties who are patients of the Miami VA Healthcare System can get the ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine***. You must be enrolled and eligible for VA healthcare benefits. Some of the sites require appointments, other locations accept walk-ins. Veterans who want to make an appointment can call 305-575-7000 or contact their care team. To learn more, visit [*https://www.miami.va.gov/services/****covid****-19-vaccines.asp*](https://www.miami.va.gov/services/covid-19-vaccines.asp)

Broward County:

Holy Cross Health in Fort Lauderdale is offering ***COVID***-19 vaccines to teens 16-and-17 years old who have certain medical conditions that make them at risk for severe ***COVID*** complications. Priority will be given to Holy Cross Medical Group patients, the hospital said. For details on how to request an appointment, visit [*www.holy-cross.com/covidvaccine*](http://www.holy-cross.com/covidvaccine).

Broward Health, to check for appointments, visit [*https://www.browardhealth.org/pages/being-healthy-****vaccine***](https://www.browardhealth.org/pages/being-healthy-vaccine)

Fort Lauderdale's Inter Miami CF Stadium is a ***COVID***-19 vaccination site. Appointments for this site are also booked through BrowardHealth.org

Memorial Healthcare System ran out of ***COVID***-19 vaccines. Once doses are available again, appointments can be made through the MyChart portal, [*https://mychart.mhs.net*](https://mychart.mhs.net) for current Memorial Healthcare patients. Others will have to call 954-276-4340.

The appointment-only ***vaccine*** locations listed in the website above are:

The Memorial Regional Conference Center, 3501 Johnson St. in Hollywood, noon to 7:30 p.m. Mondays, 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Tuesday through Friday.

Memorial Specialty Pharmacy, 9581 Premier Pkwy. in Miramar, 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Monday through Saturday.

Certain high-risk 16- and 17-year-old patients at Joe DiMaggio Children's Hospital may also be eligible for the ***vaccine***. Appointments can be scheduled through their MyChart account.

All Cleveland Clinic Florida locations, including its Weston campus, schedule appointments for patient who have seen a Cleveland Clinic Florida provider in the last two years for outpatient or inpatient care. For eligibility criteria and how to check for appointments, visit [*https://my.clevelandclinic.org/landing/****covid****-19-****vaccine****/florida*](https://my.clevelandclinic.org/landing/covid-19-vaccine/florida)

***COVID***-19 vaccines in Monroe County?

More places are offering the ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** in the Florida Keys.

Eligible Florida residents can now get vaccinated at Winn-Dixie stores in Key West and Tavernier, and at all Publix stores along the island chain. Appointments are required.

For Winn-Dixie, check [*https://www.winndixie.com/pharmacy/****covid-vaccine***](https://www.winndixie.com/pharmacy/covid-vaccine). For Publix, check [*https://www.publix.com/****covid-vaccine****/florida*](https://www.publix.com/covid-vaccine/florida).

**Load-Date:** April 7, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*A Memorial Day curfew? Miami Beach mayor floats idea after county says it's lifting curfew*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:62CJ-8CM1-JC3J-X0RC-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

April 5, 2021 Monday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** miami\_beach

**Length:** 1015 words

**Byline:**  Martin Vassolo

Miami Herald

**Body**

After spring break crowds overwhelmed Miami Beach last month, the city is preparing for another tourist wave during Memorial Day Weekend by considering a series of events and, if the mayor gets his way, another ***curfew***.

The plan, which has not yet been finalized, would include the annual Hyundai Air & Sea Show military demonstration in South Beach and at least one public concert, according to a city memo.

Mayor Dan Gelber said he also wants the city commission to consider a ***COVID***-related ***curfew*** ahead of the May 31 holiday -- even though Miami-Dade County is lifting its midnight ***curfew*** April 12.

"I'm supportive of a ***curfew*** because I think we need to act before Memorial Day, not in the midst of it," Gelber told the Miami Herald. He later added: "Obviously, ***COVID*** isn't over by any stretch and it's a little disconcerting that people seem to think it is."

He said he plans to ask the commission to consider a holiday ***curfew*** because he anticipates that large crowds will again descend on South Beach next month like they did during spring break. Notably, the county ***curfew*** will expire right as spring break ends.

But as it currently stands, Gelber does not have the support of the city manager, who gives the commission recommendations prior to votes. He assuredly won't have unanimous support from the seven-member commission either, after Commissioner Ricky Arriola said there was no reason to impose a new ***curfew***.

"There's no justification for" it, Arriola said. "The county mayor said it herself."

MIA\_0005LEVINE-CAVA110420Miami Beach Mayor Dan Gelber, right, appears at a press conference with Miami-Dade Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** and Miami Mayor Francis Suarez on Nov. 18, 2020. After Levine Cava announced she would lift the county's midnight ***COVID curfew***, Gelber said he would propose imposing a city-mandated ***curfew*** for Memorial Day weekend.

Interim City Manager Raul Aguila, who on Wednesday said he would recommend a holiday ***curfew*** if the county lifted its ***curfew***, reversed himself Monday and said he would not recommend a ***curfew*** for Memorial Day Weekend.

He said he would have "reservations" imposing a new ***COVID***-related ***curfew*** after hearing publicly from Miami-Dade Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** and her public health advisor. At Monday's press conference, Levine Cava said declining hospitalizations and deaths and an escalating ***vaccine*** effort assured her the ***curfew*** could be lifted. It was first imposed in July, nine months ago.

Aguila, Miami Beach's former city attorney, also cited an active lawsuit against the city and Miami-Dade filed by Lincoln Road nightclub Mr. Jones, alleging the county ***curfew*** violates an executive order by Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis.

"[I]f the County is no longer requiring the ***curfew*** as a health and safety measure, then I have reservations with recommending that the City adopt a ***curfew***," Aguila wrote in a text message. He said if the commission directed him to impose a new ***curfew***, he would.

Memorial Day concert will cost city $255,000

Whatever the City Commission decides, the holiday plan will be a balancing act for city leaders navigating persistent coronavirus concerns and plans to celebrate Memorial Day with annual events like the Air & Sea Show. Not to mention the crowd-control difficulties the city faced over spring break, which resurfaced years-old policy debates about the role city-funded events play in spreading out big crowds during busy weekends.

Memorial Day Weekend, also known as Urban Beach Week, has traditionally attracted crowds of largely Black visitors to Miami Beach for loosely affiliated hip-hop concerts and parties.

Just like during spring break, the city treats Memorial Day Weekend as a "high-impact" period, flooding the South Beach entertainment district with extra police. This year, rowdy spring break crowds -- along with the bouts of violence and vandalism that followed -- led Aguila to impose an 8 p.m. ***curfew*** during weekends in the South Beach entertainment district.

After scrapping plans to fund a $1 million spring break festival due to ***COVID***-19 fears, the city will cover $305,000 in permit fees and public services for the Air & Sea Show and pay $255,000 to hold an evening concert at Pride Park near the Miami Beach Convention Center.

The city has the option to fund a separate $250,000 concert and fireworks display organized by the Air & Sea Show that would otherwise be canceled due to a lack of sponsors, Aguila wrote in a memo Thursday. The Air & Sea Show, which has been held in South Beach since 2017, was canceled last year due to ***COVID***.

Air & Sea Show take over Miami Beach during Memorial Day weekendBeach goers attend the 2019 Hyundai Air & Sea Show in Miami Beach on Saturday, May 25, 2019.

The plan, which Aguila said includes enhanced policing and code enforcement, will be presented to the City Commission on April 21.

"I'm also curious to see how the crowds, if they are the spring break crowds that we saw, will react and coexist with the programming," Aguila said at a community meeting Wednesday.

Gelber said he was not thrilled with the idea of having an evening concert that would draw a crowd because public health experts still recommend social distancing to reduce the spread of ***COVID***.

He said he'll be interested to see data showing what kind of impact spring break crowds had on ***COVID*** infections. In the meantime, he would like to consider a Memorial Day ***curfew*** ahead of time, so the city does not resort to a last-minute decision.

"We can't act in the midst of Memorial Day," Gelber said. "Rather than hope that it's just fine, it might just be smarter to hedge our bets."

Arriola, who has been critical of the city's ***COVID*** restrictions, said he would support the Pride Park concert and consider the request for funding for the additional concert and fireworks display, depending on the details of the proposal.

He said if the outlook of the pandemic improves, the city should look to host more events, including some catering to Black tourists.

"We can always cancel if for some reason this thing reverses on us," Arriola said of the pandemic. "Failing to plan is planning to fail."

**Load-Date:** April 6, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Miami-Dade's midnight curfew will be lifted next week, county mayor announces*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:62CH-KYC1-DYJM-M013-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

April 5, 2021 Monday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** miami\_dade

**Length:** 1474 words

**Byline:**  Aaron Leibowitz and Joey Flechas

Miami Herald

**Body**

Miami-Dade County's midnight ***curfew*** will be lifted next week, Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** announced Monday, marking the imminent end of a measure to curb the spread of ***COVID***-19 that has survived legal challenges and rankled business owners since its implementation last summer.

At a press conference, Levine Cava said that beginning at 12:01 a.m. April 12, businesses will be able to operate past midnight in Miami-Dade -- the only county in Florida that continues to impose a ***COVID***-related ***curfew***.

She said her administration considered different data points in deciding to lift the ***curfew*** and also roll out a new, less stringent set of guidelines meant to help businesses stem the spread of the virus while getting back to work.

"We developed these new guidelines based on the current status of the ***COVID*** response, the availability of the ***vaccine***, the aggressive campaign that we're mounting," Levine Cava said outside the Stephen P. Clark Government Center in Miami. "We considered all the available data, including the 14-day [test] positivity rate, and also hospitalization from ***COVID*** and death rates. These have all declined significantly as vaccinations for the most vulnerable have expanded and our overall vaccination program has progressed."

The announcement -- made the same day that Florida opened up vaccines to all adults -- was a dramatic step toward loosening restrictions put in place by Levine Cava's predecessor, Carlos Gimenez, during the throes of the pandemic.

Before Monday's press conference, Levine Cava signed a new executive order that cancels a series of past ***COVID***-related orders and says all businesses and facilities can remain open as long as they follow four basic rules: comply with ***mask*** requirements, provide hand sanitizer or hand-washing facilities, make "reasonable efforts" to keep social distancing and ensure "sick employees do not report to work."

The new rules -- not including the lifting of the ***curfew*** -- will go into effect Tuesday at 6 p.m. Levine Cava said the eased regulations will allow childcare centers to double capacity, senior centers to resume programs and public water fountains to run again, under certain protocols.

"This truly is a turning point for us in addressing this disease," she said.

Under pressure

Levine Cava had been targeting Monday as the date to lift the ***curfew*** that forces businesses to stay closed between 12 a.m. and 6 a.m. In a March 5 memo to county commissioners, the mayor said she would lift the ***curfew*** on April 5 if ***COVID***-19 conditions improved and if the two-week average of positive test results countywide hit 5.5% or less.

As of Sunday, that number was 6.4%, slightly higher than it was both a week earlier and a month earlier.

But the mayor said the positivity rate was only one of many factors in her decision. And Levine Cava's chief medical officer, Dr. Peter Paige, said Monday that the county had expected a little bit of an increase in the positivity rate with the amount of activity in Miami this spring. The county, especially Miami Beach, has been a popular destination for spring breakers.

"We thought we'd get a little bump, but it really hasn't been as bad as we thought it could have been," he said. "So that's also a positive."

Levine Cava's announcement comes amid pressure to lift the county's ***COVID curfew***. When Levine Cava extended the midnight ***curfew*** through March, it irked some county commissioners and restaurant owners. A group of Wynwood bars and restaurants filed a challenge to the ***curfew*** in federal court, arguing that the county failed to present evidence that ***COVID***-19 "is more likely to spread ... during late-night hours as opposed to daytime hours."

Lifting the ***curfew*** will mean big changes for bar owners. Michael Beltran, who owns Taurus Whiskey Bar in Coconut Grove and Scapegoat on Miami Beach, told the Miami Herald the bars have been announcing last call at 11:20 p.m. each night and playing the song "Closing Time" at 11:55 p.m. for months, while hoping the ***curfew*** would be lifted after spring break ended.

"We've been preparing and planning for this for a while," Beltran said. "The bars had been doing a fraction of the sales they're used to. And ours are small, chill bars that aren't crazy."

Staffing shortages throughout the restaurant industry will still present a challenge. Many part-timers have left the restaurant industry. In Miami, the hospitality sector is booming, but workers have been slow to return for a variety of reasons, including access to vaccines.

Beltran's bars have liquor licenses that allow them to stay open until 3 a.m., meaning they will have to quickly hire staff and rethink work schedules.

"We're going to have to get creative," he said.

Nancy Torre, a 26-year employee at Miami International Airport and member of hospitality union Unite Here Local 355, said during the press conference that workers across the tourism and hospitality industry are eager to get back on the job now that vaccines are widely available and business restrictions are starting to ease.

"We all need to work. We lost our jobs due to ***COVID***. Some have been called back, but we all need to get back to work," she said. "We are the face of tourism here, and so we need to work safely, vaccinated and with social distancing and masks on."

In the South Beach entertainment district, the epicenter of spring break revelry and a resulting backlash from Miami Beach officials, an even stricter 8 p.m. ***curfew*** remains in place on weekends. City officials voted last month to keep the restrictions in place until April 12, when they expect spring break to wind down.

New guidelines

Gimenez, the former mayor, issued the county's New Normal rules last May coming out of a statewide ***shutdown*** and first imposed a countywide ***curfew*** in July as a surge of ***COVID***-19 infections spread through the population. The ***curfew*** started at 10 p.m. then, but was moved back to midnight.

Other than the ***curfew***, which will be completely lifted, the county's new ***COVID*** rules are similar in many ways to the prior ones, with some wrinkles.

Masks are still required in public except in certain situations, including at religious institutions and hotels and outside while standing at least 10 feet away from non-family members.

Public gatherings of 10 or more people are still banned unless people are properly socially distanced. And there's an exception for people on private boats.

Levine Cava's executive order also clarifies that employees don't need a negative ***COVID*** test before returning to work, mirroring a change the county made in its policy for county employees last month. Instead, employees can return 10 days after a positive test if they have no symptoms, 10 days after a positive test if they had mild symptoms and haven't had a fever for 24 hours, or 14 days or longer if they had severe symptoms.

As before, non-compliant businesses must shut down until they submit a form to Miami-Dade police attesting that problems have been addressed. After that, businesses must turn in compliance plans if they're caught breaking the rules again.

The county's 34 municipalities can impose stricter ***COVID*** rules than the county as they see fit.

The executive order is supplemented by a 20-page handbook that isn't legally binding but provides guidance on best practices for ***mask***-wearing, social distancing, business capacity, sanitation and signage for various types of businesses.

Vaccines and variants

Though Levine Cava said Monday that available data support reduced restrictions, there are some reasons for concern.

An analysis last week by University of South Florida professor Jason Salemi showed that, over the previous two weeks, cases in people 18-24 in Miami-Dade had increased by 39%.

Variants of the virus and a particular mutation have also caused concern among researchers in recent weeks.

And the deadly virus is still circulating at substantial rates in Florida, especially in Miami-Dade, where there are about 47 daily cases per 100,000 people. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention considers anywhere between 5 to 50 daily cases per 100,000 people "moderate" spread, while anything above that is considered "high" spread.

But the county's ***COVID*** dashboard shows that more than 458,000 of the county's approximately 2.7 million residents have received a complete ***COVID vaccine*** series (one dose of Johnson & Johnson or two doses of Pfizer or Moderna), and another 335,000 have received a first dose.

David Grutman, founder of Groot Hospitality, which runs LIV and Story nightclubs on Miami Beach, said during Monday's press conference that there's now reason to hope for better days in the near future because of the increasing availability of vaccines.

"The fact that we're able to roll out vaccines so quickly and act so quickly to get us back open, it's amazing," he said.

Miami Herald staff writer Carlos Frías contributed to this report.

**Load-Date:** April 8, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*COVID vaccine live updates: What you should know in South Florida on Monday, April 5*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:62CD-8871-DYJM-M4MY-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

April 5, 2021 Monday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** coronavirus

**Length:** 2290 words

**Byline:**  Michelle Marchante and Carli Teproff

Miami Herald

**Body**

***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** rules can be confusing in South Florida. Here's the latest news on where shots are available and who is eligible:

What's new today?

Miami-Dade County plans to move buses and Metrorail stations closer to a pre-pandemic routine this summer by lifting the suspension of passenger fares on June 1.

Florida's Department of Health on Monday announced 3,480 new confirmed cases of ***COVID***-19. The state also announced 36 new resident deaths.

One of the country's largest food festivals thought it had devised a smart approach to keeping guests safe during its upcoming event: Require a negative ***COVID***-19 test or proof of vaccination. But Florida's governor may have just complicated the South Beach Wine & Food Festival's plan for 2021.

Miami-Dade County's midnight ***curfew*** will be lifted the night of April 12, Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** announced Monday, marking the imminent end of a measure intended to curb the spread of ***COVID***-19 that has survived legal challenges and rankled business owners since its implementation last summer.

Norwegian Cruise Line Holdings will require all passengers and crew to be vaccinated against ***COVID***-19 when U.S. cruises restart, becoming the first of the three largest cruise companies to mandate inoculations for all on board.

Florida teens and young adults ages 16 to 21 can now schedule a ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** appointment through Nicklaus Children's Hospital.

Florida's vaccination age criteria dropped from 40 to 18 on Monday, with some vaccination sites also eligible to give doses to teens who are 16 and 17.

Pfizer, Moderna or Johnson & Johnson? We've created a guide that separates locations by vaccines.

Monday is your last chance to get the first dose Pfizer shot at the FEMA-supported Miami Dade College North campus vaccination site. Starting Tuesday, April 6, the site will switch to second-dose Pfizer and the single-dose J&J only.

Hialeah's pop-up ***vaccine*** site at Babcock Park has had its run extended by one day. The site was originally set to close Sunday. Now, it will be open Monday, April 5 until it runs out of Pfizer doses.

Who can get ***COVID***-19 vaccines in Florida and who can't? Do you need proof of residency?

Floida's vaccination age criteria on Monday dropped from 40 to 16 for Pfizer's ***vaccine*** and 18 for Moderna and Johnson's & Johnson ***vaccine***.

Only Florida residents and snowbirds can get the ***vaccine***, but there is no county residency requirement in place. That means that if you live in Miami-Dade, you can get the ***vaccine*** in Broward, or vice versa. You will need to show proof of Florida residency.

For snowbirds or part-time residents, the proof needs to be in the form of two documents such as a lease agreement and a utility bill no more than two months old, according to the Florida Division of Emergency Management.

Anyone else who lives in another state or country can no longer get the ***vaccine*** in Florida. Nonresidents who have already received the first dose in Florida will still be able to get the second dose.

The change was made to curb ***vaccine*** tourism, or people who travel from another state or country to get the ***vaccine*** in Miami or another part of the state.

Who should not get a ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine***?

People who have had a severe allergic reaction to ingredients in the ***vaccine*** or had a severe reaction after a previous dose. Ingredients of the Pfizer-BioNTech ***vaccine***, the Moderna ***vaccine*** and the Johnson & Johnson ***vaccine*** can be found on FDA.gov.

How many people have received the ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** in Florida?

According to Monday's ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** report, 273,169 people in Florida have completed the Johnson & Johnson single dose ***vaccine*** and 3,413,011 people have completed the two-dose series of either Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna vaccines.

Of those who have been fully vaccinated, 808,345 were Miami-Dade residents, 565,645 were Broward residents, 465,615 were Palm Beach residents and 25,374 were Monroe residents.

What ***COVID***-19 vaccines are available in Florida? How many doses do I need?

Florida has three vaccines available: Pfizer-BioNTech, Moderna and Johnson & Johnson.

The Pfizer ***vaccine*** requires two shots, three weeks apart, and can be given to people 16 and older. Moderna's ***vaccine*** requires two shots, one month apart, and can be given to people 18 and older. Johnson & Johnson's is a single dose and can be given to people 18 and older.

The Pfizer and Moderna vaccines are not interchangeable, however, which means that if your first shot was the Pfizer ***vaccine***, your second shot cannot be the Moderna ***vaccine***, according to the CDC.

***COVID***-19 vaccination sites in South Florida?

Pharmacies:

The following pharmacies offer ***COVID***-19 vaccines in select stores by appointment-only:

Publix stores in Florida offer vaccines. To check for a slot, visit publix.com/***covid-vaccine***/florida.

Navarro Discount Pharmacies and CVS y mas stores in Miami-Dade. Some traditional CVS stores across Florida also have doses. To check for availability, visit CVS.com or call customer service at 800-746-7287.

Some Winn-Dixie and Fresco y Mas stores offer vaccines in South Florida. For Winn-Dixie, visit winndixie.com/pharmacy/***covid-vaccine***. For Fresco y Mas, visit frescoymas.com/pharmacy/***covid-vaccine***.

Some Walmart and Sam's Club stores offer vaccines, including in Broward and Miami-Dade counties. To schedule a ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** appointment at Walmart, visit walmart.com/COVIDvaccine. For Sam's Clubs, visit samsclub.com/***covid***.

Some Walgreens stores offer vaccines. To check for availability visit [*https://www.walgreens.com/topic/promotion/****covid-vaccine****.jsp*](https://www.walgreens.com/topic/promotion/covid-vaccine.jsp)

Federally supported site in Miami-Dade

Miami Dade College North campus is the first federally supported vaccination site to open in South Florida. Appointments are not required and walk-ins are welcome. The site is open every day from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. and is a walk-up, which means people wait in line instead of in their car.

Anyone who lives in Florida and is at least 18 can get the Johnson & Johnson ***vaccine*** at MDC North beginning Tuesday. The site will no longer offer the first dose of the Pfizer ***vaccine***. Those who have already gotten their first dose of Pfizer will still be able to get their second shot at MDC North.

The FEMA pop-up sites are at Allen Park Community Center at 1770 NE 162nd St. in North Miami Beach and at the Miami Springs Community Center at 1401 Westward Dr. through April 7 and appointments are not needed. The pop-ups are open from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. and are only offering second dose Pfizer shots.

MDC North will stop offering first dose Pfizer shots and only offer second doses of the Pfizer ***vaccine*** and the single dose J&J shot starting Tuesday, April 6.

Preregister for an appointment in Miami-Dade and Broward counties

You can preregister for an appointment in Florida through a statewide website and phone system.

The website is myvaccine.fl.gov. You can also pre-register by phone. To find the designated number for your county, visit floridahealthcovid19.gov.

Anyone who preregisters for a ***vaccine*** appointment will be notified once they're eligible and a slot becomes available at state-supported or federally supported vaccination sites in their county, according to the Florida Division of Emergency Management, which is tasked with the state's ***vaccine*** distribution.

Many of the state-run sites offer Pfizer, which means people 16 and older are eligible for a shot. Once you get an appointment, you will need to show proof that you are a Florida resident.

State-run sites in Miami-Dade County include Hard Rock Stadium in Miami Gardens and Marlins Park in Miami.

State-run sites in Broward County include Snyder Park in Fort Lauderdale, Coral Square Mall in Coral Springs, Markham Park in Sunrise, Tree Tops Park in Davie, Trade Winds Park in Coconut Creek and Central Regional Park in Lauderhill, TY Park in Hollywood and Pompano City Centre in Pompano Beach.

Remember, teens 16 and 17-years-old will need to have a parent or legal guardian with them the day of their vaccination and have the state's ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** screening and consent form. The form can be downloaded at floridahealthcovid19.gov.

Hospitals and other ***COVID***-19 vaccination sites in Miami-Dade, Broward

Miami-Dade County:

The county has a website, miamidade.gov/***vaccine***, where it posts updates on where people can find and schedule ***COVID***-19 vaccination appointments.

County-run sites include Zoo Miami, Tropical Park and the Homestead Sports Complex. The sites sometimes carry Pfizer and other times the sites have Moderna in stock.

You can preregister for an appointment through the online portal or by calling 305-614-2014. Once an appointment becomes available, you will be contacted.

Here are other places that have vaccines. Some locations may be vaccinating specific groups from Florida's priority list so check the location's website for details.

The City of Opa-locka ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** site is at the Helen Miller Center, 2331 NW 143rd St.. The site is open every day from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. Appointments are not required but pre-registration is recommended. To pre-register, visit Commvax.patientportalfl.com.

Bucky Dent Park, 2250 W. 60th St., in Hialeah. Anyone who meets Florida's ***vaccine*** criteria can get a shot here. No appointments are needed. You will wait standing in line, instead of in your car. The site is open daily from 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. or until supplies run out.

Hialeah residents who are unable to leave their homes can call 305-863-2955 to schedule a homebound vaccination.

Overtown Youth Center, 1551 NW First Ave, is open from 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.. The state-run site does not require appointments. You will wait standing in line, instead of in your car. You must fall into one of Florida's priority groups to get the ***vaccine***.

Oak Grove Park, 690 NE 159th St. is open from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. The state-run site does not require appointments. You will wait standing in line, instead of in your car. You must fall into one of Florida's priority groups to get the ***vaccine***.

Homebound seniors can email their name and phone number to [*HomeboundVaccine@em.myflorida.com*](mailto:HomeboundVaccine@em.myflorida.com) and someone will get back to you about setting up an appointment. You can also call 866-779-6121 to schedule an appointment.

Jackson Health System, the county's public hospital network. To check for available appointments, visit [*https://jhsmiami.org/comvac/*](https://jhsmiami.org/comvac/).

Mount Sinai Medical Center in Miami Beach schedules appointments online. To check for updates, visit msmc.com/coronavirus-update/

Baptist Health is one of the county's largest private hospitals. To check for updates, visit Baptisthealth.net/***vaccine***.

Seniors who seek care with Leon Medical Centers can call customer service at 305-642-5366 to schedule a free ***COVID***-19 vaccination appointment. If you need transportation, let the operator know so they can also schedule a driver to pick you up. Appointments will be scheduled until Leon runs out of vaccines.

Nicklaus Children's Hospital is offering vaccines to young adults ages 16 to 21 who are being treated for certain high-risk medical conditions. To check for slots, visit Nicklauschildrens.org/Covid19Vaccine.

All veterans in Miami-Dade, Broward and Monroe counties who are patients of the Miami VA Healthcare System can get the ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine***, regardless of age and medical condition. You must be enrolled and eligible for VA healthcare benefits. Some of the sites require appointments, other locations accept walk-ins. Veterans who want to make an appointment can call 305-575-7000 or contact their care team. To learn more, visit [*https://www.miami.va.gov/services/****covid****-19-vaccines.asp*](https://www.miami.va.gov/services/covid-19-vaccines.asp)

Broward County:

Holy Cross Health in Fort Lauderdale is offering ***COVID***-19 vaccines to teens 16-and-17 years old who have certain medical conditions that make them at risk for severe ***COVID*** complications. Priority will be given to Holy Cross Medical Group patients, the hospital said. For details on how to request an appointment, visit [*www.holy-cross.com/covidvaccine*](http://www.holy-cross.com/covidvaccine).

Broward Health, to check for appointments, visit [*https://www.browardhealth.org/pages/being-healthy-****vaccine***](https://www.browardhealth.org/pages/being-healthy-vaccine)

Fort Lauderdale's Inter Miami CF Stadium is a ***COVID***-19 vaccination site. Appointments for this site are also booked through BrowardHealth.org

Memorial Healthcare System ran out of ***COVID***-19 vaccines. Once doses are available again, appointments can be made through the MyChart portal, [*https://mychart.mhs.net*](https://mychart.mhs.net) for current Memorial Healthcare patients. Others will have to call 954-276-4340.

The appointment-only ***vaccine*** locations listed in the website above are:

The Memorial Regional Conference Center, 3501 Johnson St. in Hollywood, noon to 7:30 p.m. Mondays, 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Tuesday through Friday.

Memorial Specialty Pharmacy, 9581 Premier Pkwy. in Miramar, 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Monday through Saturday.

Certain high-risk 16- and 17-year-old patients at Joe DiMaggio Children's Hospital may also be eligible for the ***vaccine***. Appointments can be scheduled through their MyChart account.

All Cleveland Clinic Florida locations, including its Weston campus, schedule appointments for patient who have seen a Cleveland Clinic Florida provider in the last two years for outpatient or inpatient care. For eligibility criteria and how to check for appointments, visit [*https://my.clevelandclinic.org/landing/****covid****-19-****vaccine****/florida*](https://my.clevelandclinic.org/landing/covid-19-vaccine/florida)

***COVID***-19 vaccines in Monroe County?

More places are offering the ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** in the Florida Keys.

Eligible Florida residents can now get vaccinated at Winn-Dixie stores in Key West and Tavernier, and at all Publix stores along the island chain. Appointments are required.

For Winn-Dixie, check [*https://www.winndixie.com/pharmacy/****covid-vaccine***](https://www.winndixie.com/pharmacy/covid-vaccine). For Publix, check [*https://www.publix.com/****covid-vaccine****/florida*](https://www.publix.com/covid-vaccine/florida).

**Load-Date:** April 6, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Windstar Cruises will require passengers to have COVID-19 vaccine*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:62B9-S101-DYJM-M3M4-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

March 31, 2021 Wednesday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** tourism\_cruises

**Length:** 297 words

**Byline:**  Taylor Dolven

Miami Herald

**Body**

Small ship company Windstar Cruises will require passengers to be vaccinated against ***COVID***-19.

The company announced the requirement Tuesday as it plans to restart cruises in the Caribbean and Mediterranean in June after more than a year out of operation. The company will require crew members to get vaccinated "as soon as vaccinations are available to them."

Windstar follows Virgin Voyages, which announced earlier this month it will require passengers and crew to be vaccinated when cruises restart. Royal Caribbean Group, which plans to restart cruises in the Caribbean in June, will require crew and passengers over the age of 18 to be vaccinated, and Crystal Cruises, which plans to restart cruises in The Bahamas in July, will require passengers to have the ***vaccine***.

"Vaccination is another layer of safety for all of us, and it's the responsible course of action as our yachts resume cruising and our guests travel the world," said Christopher Prelog, President of Windstar Cruises, in a statement. The company will also require proof of negative ***COVID***-19 test results at embarkation.

Cruises remain banned in the U.S. as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reviews cruise companies' progress on the first phase of its "conditional sail order," which requires companies to test crew members for ***COVID***-19 weekly and report results to the agency.

In recent days the cruise industry, along with Miami-Dade Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** and Florida Governor Ron DeSantis, has ramped up its pressure on the agency to scrap the conditional sail order and allow cruises in the U.S. to resume by July.

Windstar has six cruise ships ranging in size from 148- to 342-passenger capacity. In February the company announced it is moving its headquarters from Seattle to Miami in 2022.

**Load-Date:** March 31, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Miami-Dade's COVID spread complicating mayor's plan to lift midnight curfew next week*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:62B8-F961-DYJM-M2BH-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

March 30, 2021 Tuesday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** miami\_dade

**Length:** 931 words

**Byline:**  Douglas Hanks

Miami Herald

**Body**

Test results for ***COVID***-19 are heading the wrong way in Miami-Dade County, a slight shift that's complicating a plan Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** announced a month ago to lift the county's midnight ***curfew*** next week if testing statistics improved.

Under pressure by some county commissioners and businesses to let restaurants and bars stay open overnight, Levine Cava in early March announced a timetable that kept the restrictions in place during the peak of the spring break season.

In a March 5 memo to commissioners, Levine Cava said she would lift the ***curfew*** April 5 if ***COVID***-19 conditions improved and if the two-week average of positive ***COVID*** results countywide hit 5.5% or less.

With one week left to go to move the numbers, Miami-Dade's "positivity" rate is inching higher, not lower. After dipping below 6% for most of last week, the daily positivity rate hit 6.06% on Saturday and 7.59% on Sunday.

Those results skewed the curve even further away from hitting Levine Cava's ***curfew*** target. The new two-week average was 6.3% heading into the last full week before April 5 arrives, roughly the same level as when Levine Cava announced her plan in early March.

A week ago, the average was 6.2%.

Levine Cava's memo described a 5.5% average as a requirement for lifting the ***curfew***. On Tuesday, the mayor and her top spokesperson emphasized other numbers would also be part of the decision.

"The 5.5% is a benchmark used to gauge community spread, coupled with hospitalization rates and deaths, and now percent of vaccinated residents," said Rachel Johnson, Levine Cava's top spokesperson. The mayor is meeting with medical advisers "and reviewing the data and trends so we can provide an update to the community on the ***curfew*** by April 5."

Curfews under Gimenez, Levine Cava

The countywide ***curfew***, which expires at 6 a.m. each day, remains Miami-Dade's most embattled ***COVID***-19 emergency restriction.

Then-mayor Carlos Gimenez first imposed a countywide ***curfew*** in July, as a surge of ***COVID***-19 infections spread through the population. The ***curfew*** started at 10 p.m. then, but was moved back as the positivity rate declined and ***COVID***-19 hospitalization numbers receded.

At a Miami Herald online forum on Tuesday, Levine Cava said she hoped "we'll continue with these positive trends" allowing the county to "revisit" the midnight ***curfew***.

While the positivity rate is on the rise, ***COVID***-19 hospitalizations have been dropping for the last two weeks -- from an average of 623 per day on March 14 to an average of 547 on Sunday, the most recent data available.

Levine Cava defended the ***curfew***, but also emphasized masking, cleaning and social distancing as the key to protecting against ***COVID***-19.

"I know many are eager to eliminate the ***curfew***," she said during the Herald's Florida Priorities panel discussion on post-pandemic Miami. "But let's just say, from midnight to 6, a lot of people are not on their guard. They may be partying. They may be having more to drink...We don't want to have these super-spreader events."

levine cava ***curfew***

Spring Break and ***COVID*** spread in Miami-Dade

Last week, Levine Cava's top medical adviser predicted a link between the county's influx of spring break visitors and more local ***COVID***-19 spread.

"Spring break obviously is going to have an impact on our positivity rate across the county," Dr. Peter Paige, a Jackson Health administrator who also serves as Levine Cava's chief medical officer, said during a public briefing Friday for county commissioners.

"Even though spring breakers may come in and leave -- at least a high percentage of them will -- they'll interact with a lot of people who live here locally," Paige said. "We still have to remain vigilant."

So far, Miami-Dade has fended off court challenges to its ***curfew***, allowing it to remain the only county in Florida ordering restaurants, bars and other businesses deemed non-essential to shut down at midnight.

Jonathan Schwartz, a Doral lawyer representing Wynwood bars and restaurants in one ***curfew*** case and the Mr. Jones nightclub on Miami Beach in another, said it makes no sense to punish businesses catering to overnight customers.

Why should restaurants on South Beach's Ocean Drive be allowed to serve drinks to large crowds throughout the day during spring break, he asked, while clubs that would market to the same customers at night can't sell the the same drinks?

"A lot of these guys are on the verge of losing everything they've built," he said of his clients. "It's horrendous."

Broward County also imposed its own ***curfew*** in late December, but saw a judge block that restriction in a case that's still underway in federal court.

'Everybody thinks ***COVID*** is over'

Broward scored a win last week on appeal, with the Eleventh Circuit allowing the county to reimpose its original ***curfew*** order. But that's not happening, according to Mayor Steve Geller.

During the court fight, the county and Fort Lauderdale agreed to close restaurants and bars over "egregious" violations of county ***COVID***-19 rules, such as requiring masks indoors. The county plans to continue enforcement, rather than force all businesses to close overnight under a ***curfew***.

"We are not going to be doing a new ***curfew***, barring unforeseen circumstances," Geller said.

Positivity rates are climbing in Broward, too, and Geller said the lack of a ***curfew*** doesn't reflect any comfort with the current ***COVID***-19 statistics.

"I'm feeling horrible about ***COVID***. We are heading in exactly the wrong direction," he said.

"I can't tell you why," Geller said. "Is it because of spring break?...Is it because everybody thinks ***COVID*** is over?"

**Load-Date:** March 31, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Cruises will remain banned, CDC says, as industry pressure to restart heats up*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:629F-W831-JC3J-X4BD-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

March 27, 2021 Saturday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** tourism\_cruises

**Length:** 1055 words

**Byline:**  Taylor Dolven

Miami Herald

**Body**

Despite increasing pressure from the cruise industry and its allies in government, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention plans to prevent cruises from U.S. ports for the foreseeable future.

Florida governor Ron DeSantis, Miami-Dade Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava***, and the cruise industry lobbying group CLIA are pressuring the CDC to allow U.S. cruises as soon as July 1. But the agency is not budging on its "conditional sail order," which gives cruise companies a long list of requirements they must meet before being allowed to restart.

The government officials say the conditional sail order, first issued by the CDC in October and in place until November 2021, is outdated and unnecessary now that several ***COVID***-19 vaccines are available.

"I urge the CDC to immediately rescind this baseless no-sail order to allow Floridians in this industry to get back to work," said DeSantis at a press conference at Port Canaveral Friday.

He joins Levine Cava, who sent a letter to CDC Director Rochelle Walensky last week, saying she would welcome guidance from the CDC allowing cruises by July for only vaccinated passengers and crew. Around 60,000 South Floridians work directly or indirectly for the cruise industry.

MIA\_PORT\_MIAMI\_DAV12.JPGCruise ships are docked and lined up at Port of Miami in Miami, Florida, on Monday, May 4, 2020.

Earlier this month, CDC spokesperson Caitlin Shockey said a majority, but not all, of the six cruise companies with ships in U.S. waters had complied with the first phase of the order: Test all crew members for ***COVID***-19 weekly and report results to the agency.

In response to Cruise Lines International Association's public demands Thursday that the conditional sail order be lifted, Shockey said the order remains in effect.

"On October 30, 2020, CDC issued Framework for Conditional Sailing Order (CSO) that remains in effect until November 1, 2021," she said in an email. "Returning to passenger cruising is a phased approach to mitigate the risk of spreading ***COVID***-19. Details for the next phase of the CSO are currently under interagency review."

The CDC first banned cruises in U.S. waters in March 2020 amid ***COVID***-19 outbreaks on multiple ships. After extensive lobbying from the industry, it lifted its no-sail order on October 30, replacing it with the conditional sail order. In November, the CDC added instructions for lab testing, and in December it expanded the list of tests cruise companies can use.

Since then, crew members have continued to test positive for the virus at sea. Thirty-three cruise ships in U.S. waters have reported crew members testing positive for ***COVID***-19 or having ***COVID***-like illness (clinically compatible without laboratory confirmation) since the start of the year, according to CDC documents obtained by the Herald.

MIA\_113CoronaCoralP04NEWPPP.JPGAmbulances are seen coming out of Terminal D after the Coral Princess cruise ship, with 2 deaths aboard, docked at Port of Miami, on Saturday, April 4, 2020.

In a statement Thursday, CLIA, the cruise industry's lobbying group, urged the CDC to allow cruising by July, noting that cruises have long resumed in other parts of the world including Singapore, China and Italy, hosting nearly 400,000 passengers since the pandemic began with minimal ***COVID***-19 outbreaks.

"This is a testament to the industry's unparalleled expertise, gained over more than half a century, in coordinating movements of guests and crew, efficiently organizing complex embarkations and excursions, and designing vessels that are more technologically advanced and operationally agile than any other mode of transportation," said Kelly Craighead, the group's CEO, in a statement.

Dr. Michael Callahan, director of the Clinical Translation, ***Vaccine*** and Immunotherapy Center at Massachusetts General Hospital, who worked with Japanese health authorities to care for and evacuate sick passengers and crew on the Diamond Princess cruise ship last February, said in an interview Friday it is too soon to be resuming U.S. cruises. He wants the industry to wait until the vaccines are rolled out, more is known about the new ***COVID*** virus variants, and quicker, better tests come on the market.

Over the last three weeks, the U.S. has recorded about 55,000 cases a day, the same number of people who tested positive in a record-setting day last July.

"We're not at the ninth inning, we're in the third inning," Callahan said, citing spikes in ***COVID***-19 cases even in well-vaccinated areas, and new virus variants that may be able to permeate the immunity. "The risk is escalating. It's a race between our ***vaccine***, the only thing we have going for us, and ... the desire of businesses to get back to business thinking that the ***vaccine*** is going to bail them out."

MIA\_***COVID***\_Cruise\_MJO\_6The Oceania Cruises' Riviera ship can be seen out in the water near Miami Beach, Florida, on Friday, May 15, 2020.

Cruise companies tired of waiting for the CDC go-ahead are inviting U.S. residents to fly to the Caribbean for cruises there this summer. Royal Caribbean Group will begin seven-night cruises from The Bahamas and St. Maarten to Mexico, Tortola, St. Lucia, Aruba, Curaçao and Barbados in June, followed by Crystal Cruises in The Bahamas in July.

Royal Caribbean Group will require crew and passengers over 18 to be vaccinated, and Crystal Cruises will require all passengers to be vaccinated. Neither company plans to comply with many of the rules outlined in the CDC's order, including PCR testing for all passengers and crew on embarkation and disembarkation days, publicizing CDC cruise travel warnings in all marketing materials, and ending cruises immediately in the case of an outbreak.

Carnival Cruise Line President Christine Duffy said the company does not have plans to restart cruises outside of the U.S. in a video address Friday. The company has not yet decided if it will require vaccines.

Cruise industry analysts say the biggest three cruise companies -- Carnival Corporation, Royal Caribbean Group, and Norwegian Cruise Line Holdings -- have raised enough cash to last another 15 cruise-less months.

The CDC currently has a Level 4 warning against cruise travel -- the agency's highest -- and "recommends that all people avoid travel on cruise ships, including river cruises, worldwide, because the risk of ***COVID***-19 on cruise ships is very high."

**Load-Date:** March 27, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Gov. DeSantis announces when Florida's COVID vaccine age will drop to 40 and then to 18*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6292-KCW1-JC3J-X16P-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

March 25, 2021 Thursday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** coronavirus

**Length:** 250 words

**Byline:**  David J. Neal

Miami Herald

**Body**

All Florida adults will be able to get vaccinated against ***COVID***-19 as of April 5, Gov. Ron DeSantis announced Thursday morning.

The next reduction of the age level for automatic vaccination eligibility, which now stands at 50, will be Monday, when the age drops to 40. The following Monday, the age will drop to 18.

Those 16- and 17-year-olds considered by a physician to be "extremely vulnerable" can get vaccinated at Jackson Health, Nicklaus Children's, CVS Pharmacies and Navarro Pharmacies.

Florida residents can pre-register at the state ***COVID*** vaccination site or call the ***vaccine*** pre-registration number for their county.

DeSantis makes this move two weeks after President Joe Biden directed all states, tribes and territories to have a plan for all adults to be eligible to be vaccinated by May 1. That same day, Miami-Dade Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** asked DeSantis to come up with a schedule for making all Floridians age eligible for vaccination and laid out her own plan.

What DeSantis announced Thursday makes all adults eligible a month earlier than what Levine Cava proposed then and a week earlier than a revised plan she laid out to county commissioners last week.

DeSantis March 25 Tweet

Herald Staff Writer Michelle Marchante contributed to this report.

FEMA pop-ups are in Sweetwater, Florida City again. Second doses only

A walk-up ***COVID*** vaccination site has opened in Opa-locka. Here are the details

How can you get a ***COVID vaccine***? What to know about the rules at each South Florida site

**Load-Date:** March 26, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Who will vaccinate Miami-Dade jail detainees? Several hundred qualify but have no access*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6297-7P81-JC3J-X34F-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

March 25, 2021 Thursday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** coronavirus

**Length:** 1119 words

**Byline:**  Ben Conarck

Miami Herald

**Body**

Donning a loose-fitting orange jumpsuit, a Miami-Dade jail detainee became one of the first in the state to receive a ***COVID vaccine*** on Thursday morning, as indicated by the gaggle of TV camera operators, reporters and county dignitaries surrounding him just past the facility's fortified entrance.

After the nurse removed the needle from his heavily tattooed arm, the man, who was not identified, jumped up from his plastic seat and shouted, "Thank you!"

His gratitude was warranted. Florida's most populous county, Miami-Dade, is one of a handful in the state where local officials have at least started to vaccinate their jail detainees, despite the fact that untold thousands of incarcerated people qualify for the vaccines under Gov. Ron DeSantis' eligibility criteria, live in crowded conditions and have no way to get a shot on their own.

Just 61 of the approximately 4,000 detainees in Miami-Dade Corrections and Rehabilitation Department custody had been vaccinated before Thursday morning, when District 9 Commissioner Kionne McGhee held a news conference to announce he'd forged a partnership with a local health clinic to vaccinate jail detainees. That brought the total vaccinated to 161.

How to prevent and combat coronavirus in jails, prisons, and juvenile detention facilitiesCorrections professionals deal with risks and threats daily. Infectious diseases are part of what officers and staff face on their daily walk. They can't stop taking in detainees just because there's a pandemic.

The doses were from Johnson & Johnson, meaning there is no follow-up shot -- a good thing since a detainee could be freed from jail or en route to a Florida prison by the time 21 days had rolled around.

A spokesperson for the county corrections department said in addition to the 161 who had been vaccinated Thursday, there are 447 detainees over the age of 50 who have an underlying medical condition that could put them at risk for severe ***COVID*** -- qualifying them for the ***vaccine***. An additional 727 would be eligible next week, when the minimum age drops to 40.

McGhee referred to those in the jail as the county's "detained residents."

"They too deserve an opportunity to be a part of the vaccination roll-out," McGhee said in front of the cameras. "This is not something we are doing so we can simply do it and count numbers. This is a population that has been lost, left out, but more than anything, completely pushed away from our norms."

McGhee recruited Community Health of South Florida -- a federally qualified health center, which has been inoculating vulnerable, low-income and homeless people -- to administer the shots.

There had been no plan in place to vaccinate Miami-Dade jail detainees, who are technically under the care of Jackson Health System, the county's public hospital. While Jackson has been vaccinating large swaths of the public, it's been using two-dose vaccines that it says would be logistically challenging to administer to the rotating population inside county jails.

Over the course of the pandemic, 1,864 detainees and 846 staff members have tested positive at Miami-Dade jails, according to Jackson. Three who were held in the jail have died from ***COVID***, Jackson said, and at least one corrections officer, Jairo Bravo, 48, died over the summer from the disease.

McGhee, the county commissioner, said he had plans to meet with DeSantis next week to discuss the importance of vaccinating jail detainees, who, along with prisoners in state custody, have been left out of the state's efforts.

In response to questions about vaccinating the incarcerated with risk factors, DeSantis said about a week ago: "'We are focusing obviously on our law-abiding population first."

Who will vaccinate the rest?

At the Thursday press conference, Miami-Dade Public Defender Carlos Martinez lauded the corrections director, Daniel Junior, for his response to the pandemic, particularly his isolation and testing policies.

Martinez, whose office overlooks the jail's entrance, said it was the first news conference he had attended since the pandemic began a year ago.

"Let's keep it going," he said. "By this time, 30 days from now, the challenge is: not 100, let's do 1,000."

MIA\_102CorJailCovid25NEWPPPDaniel Junior, director of the Miami-Dade Corrections and Rehabilitation Department, speaks during an event at the Miami-Dade Pre-Trial Detention Center to announce that inmates will receive 100 doses of the ***vaccine*** in Miami, on Thursday, March 24, 2021.

Junior, who took the lectern later, echoed that sentiment. He credited McGhee for reaching out to the department and offering access to his allocation of the ***vaccine***. But with several hundreds of detainees still eligible and unvaccinated, it was unclear where the rest would come from.

Jackson, which has vaccinated more than 131,000 people since January, said it is using the Pfizer ***vaccine*** exclusively, which requires the 21-day separation between doses.

Jackson's Corrections Health Services stands ready to vaccinate inmates as soon as the county or state provides us with supplies of a one-dose option, such as the Johnson & Johnson ***vaccine***, which is more effective in protecting this transient population, does not require ultra-cold storage, and can be administered easily on-site in the jails," said a hospital spokesperson.

But the one-shot ***vaccine*** has been in scarce supply in Florida and throughout the country due to production delays. Miami-Dade County has not received any supply of Johnson & Johnson, according to the Miami-Dade County Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava***'s spokesperson.

Despite an allegation posted on Twitter from state Rep. Omari Hardy, a West Palm Beach Democrat, that DeSantis had directed health officials to withhold the ***vaccine*** from detainees, Levine Cava said the county was under no such order.

A spokesperson for DeSantis did not respond to a request for comment on the allegation.

"We haven't been operating under any policy to withhold vaccines from people who are in jail," the Miami-Dade mayor's office said in a statement.

Instead, county and local officials pinned the issue on logistics -- needing a one-dose ***vaccine*** that was easier to administer for transient populations -- at least as it pertains to those in jail, many of whom are are not yet convicted and rotate in and out of facilities much more frequently than state inmates, who have also been denied access to vaccines.

It's unclear when the county will receive more doses of the Johnson & Johnson ***vaccine***.

McGhee said he was "casting a wide net" on where to turn next.

"I'm not quite sure if we're going to hit the 1,000 [in 30 days] mark," he said after the news conference. "But we've got to have hope, and we have to press our foot on the gas."

**Load-Date:** March 26, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Spring break's broken trust. Will Frank flip? Is there a new casino in the cards?*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:628C-BYC1-JC3J-X00C-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

March 22, 2021 Monday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** politics\_policy\_in\_sunshine\_state

**Length:** 1788 words

**Byline:**  Mary Ellen Klas

Newsletters |

**Body**

It's Monday, March 22, and spring break meltdown is upon us. But in Tallahassee, everyone wants to know: Will Frank flip?

In a stunning sequence of events last week, police raided the Palmetto Bay home of former state senator Frank Artiles on Wednesday. Judging by the arrest warrant, they may have been looking for his home safe.

Pay-off problems: That's where investigators said Artiles allegedly kept the cash he used to pay off sham candidate Alexis "Alex" Rodriguez to "confuse voters and siphon votes" from Democrat José Javier Rodríguez, the state Senate District 37 incumbent. Republican Sen. Ileana Garcia defeated the incumbent senator by 32 votes out of 215,000 ballots cast, while Alex Rodriguez received more than 6,000 votes.

Felony charges: Artiles left the Senate in disgrace four years ago after calling his Senate colleague racial slurs and amid revelations he used his political committee to hire a Hooters "calendar girl" and a Playboy "Miss Social" as paid consultants.

The idea of recruiting a ghost candidate to deceive voters is nothing new. But if money changed hands as prosecutors allege, it had to have come from somewhere. A day after the police raid, Artiles was hit with third-degree felony charges and released on bond. Investigators said they still don't know where the $44,000 they alleged he paid Rodriguez came from and whether it was connected to at least two other close Senate races.

Rodriguez' lawyer told the New York Times: "This was a well-thought-out, calculated and coordinated plan to steal Senate seats throughout Florida," adding: the "greatest beneficiary of these actions is the Republican Party of Florida."

Stay tuned.

Dems want new election: Florida Democratic Party Chairman Manny Diaz said that because of doubts about the integrity of the election, Garcia, who says she knew nothing of the scheme, should resign and a special election should be called for Miami-Dade Senate District 37.

Spring break chaos: As crowds crammed Ocean Drive in Miami Beach last week, fights broke out and the violence prompted a crackdown and a ***curfew***. The popular Clevelander hotel shut down its food and beverage service until March 24. The city imposed an 8 p.m. ***curfew*** and closed the causeways. To enforce the temporary rules, police resorted to using pepper-spray balls, SWAT teams and a military-style vehicles rolling down Ocean Drive.

Partiers persist: By Sunday noon, however, hundreds of brunch-starved tourists paraded through Ocean Drive again, packing the beach-side restaurants. The iconic afternoon drag show was underway at Palace Bar.

***Curfew*** continued: By Sunday evening, the Miami Beach City Commission voted to extend the spring break ***curfew*** in South Beach and close its main causeways during weekends for the rest of spring break, through April 12. By nightfall, after the restrictions took effect., hundreds of singing and dancing spring breakers continued to crowd some areas of South Beach.

WHAT WE'RE WATCHING ON VACCINES

Demand softens: The governor's tight control over ***vaccine*** access continued to slow demand last week as experts warned that his requirement that people produce a doctor's note to show proof of a medical condition was slowing down vaccinations and hurting low-income people.

Dropping age: With demand for the ***vaccine*** slowing in many parts of the state, DeSantis announced that starting March 22, the vaccination eligibility will drop from age 60 to 50. But Miami-Dade and Orange County continued to defy him. Miami-Dade Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** said she would open county-run vaccination sites to people 40 and over on March 29, and then younger after that.

In Miami-Dade, law enforcement, firefighters, pre-K-12 school personnel and childcare workers of any age were allowed to register for a ***COVID***-19 vaccination.

Defiant locals: Conflicts continued between the governor and local governments over ***COVID***-19 restrictions. On March 10, DeSantis signed an executive order declaring that all fines for violating local ***COVID***-19 orders were canceled. Last week, several mayors issued a statement criticizing the governor's order and four days later Miami-Dade police announced they will resume fining people who don't wear masks or who violate ***curfew***.

Baptist favoritism: We continue to learn more about the depths to which people in power put their friends ahead of the ***vaccine*** line. Last week, details emerged that Baptist Health of South Florida was offering ***COVID***-19 vaccines to its top donors before offering them to the public during a time when many seniors were struggling to get a ***vaccine*** appointment.

WHAT WE'RE TALKING ABOUT

Brady\_Madsummer.pngTampa Bay Buccaneers quarterback Tom Brady and some of his associates on Jeffrey Soffer's Madsummer superyacht after the Super Bowl on Feb. 7.

Casino Royale: Miami Beach real estate mogul Jeff Soffer used his superyacht, and his friendship with Tom Brady, to get renewed attention from Florida legislators to his long-sought bid for a Miami Beach casino. Details are scarce but we're hearing that a draft bill is expected out this week.

'Getting close': DeSantis and Simpson met with 20 top officials of Florida's casinos, poker rooms, horse tracks and jai-alai facilities on Thursday and reported that they were "getting close" to a new gambling deal with the Seminole Tribe of Florida. Anyone who has been in Tallahassee long, however, has heard this before. "It seems to be the third rail of the Legislature,'' said House Speaker Chris Sprowls.

Worry on the Beach: Revelations that the legislation may include a gaming permit for Soffer to put a casino at his Fontainebleau Hotel set off alarm bells at the Miami Beach City Commission last week. The commission promptly voted to hire additional lobbying firepower to fight the bill, and initiate a legal challenge if legislators attempt to permit casino gambling in the city or county without local consent.

WHAT WE'RE WATCHING IN THE LEGISLATURE

$4 billon wish list: Of the $10 billion in pandemic relief headed to Florida from the federal government, DeSantis has come up with a $4.1 billion wish list. He wants to spend it on bulking up infrastructure, bolstering efforts to fight rising sea levels, fixing the troubled unemployment system and providing first responders with $1,000 bonuses.

Rejecting the eligible: In its determination to avoid paying fraud claims, Florida unemployment system also routinely rejected claims for eligible jobless workers, state records show. Pregnant women, Floridians sick with ***COVID***-19 and those caring for children at home were among those denied benefits because they weren't "able and available" for work under state law.

Bright Futures clouded: Senate President Simpson's attempt to tinker with the state's popular Bright Futures Program has run into some storm clouds. Following an uproar from students and parents, Senate Republicans revamped the bill that initially proposed reducing the amounts covered under the college scholarship program and replaced it with a plan to tie scholarship amounts to degrees that lead to jobs. The bumpy start wasn't helped when DeSantis then surprised Simpson and told reporters he supports the current system.

Public health threat? The zeal to stop local officials from issuing regulations during the pandemic has led to a contradiction. Lawmakers are advancing legislation that says it's OK for local governments to regulate smoking in parks because of public health concerns. But when it comes to public health concerns related to the coronavirus, they are moving another bill that says it's not OK to regulate masks, fines or social distancing.

Liability limits loom: The Legislature's first substantial response to the coronavirus pandemic passed the Florida Senate last week. A sweeping measure that would make it much harder to sue businesses, governments and healthcare companies passed the Senate on a party line vote and is now headed to the House, where the House Speaker has signaled it will pass.

Pandemic innovations: Bills being considered by the Legislature would make permanent some of the pandemic-imposed alterations to daily life that served to make avoiding personal interaction more convenient. The bills will allow Floridians to continue to get alcoholic drinks delivered from restaurants, access telemedicine even for pets, and expand remote education.

Transgender athletes: The latest front in the culture wars has made its way to the Florida Legislature. Republican lawmakers have proposed a bill which would ban transgender athletes from competing in school-sponsored girls' sports, arguing that the integrity of gender-specific competition is at stake. Activists for transgender rights say the legislation is thinly disguised bigotry which purports to solve a problem that does not exist.

Targeting legal notices: The Florida House last week also voted a bill to strip the state's more than 100 newspapers of the legal advertising revenue they continue to rely on. The bill's sponsor, Rep. Randy Fine, R-Palm Bay, argues that requiring print publications to publish legal notices amounts to a government subsidy of the "dying" newspaper business. The Florida Press Association, which counts dozens of Florida's newspapers among its members, opposes the bill. It argues that millions of Floridians still read the print newspaper and legal notices published in widely disseminated print publications provide the community with important information.

FPL fix: Legislators have come up with a plan to help Florida Power & Light pay for the expensive fix to its leaky nuclear cooling canal system, which has created an underground saltwater plume that threatens surrounding drinking water wells and Biscayne Bay. Bills moving in the House and Senate will let the company pass the cost along to customers by raising rates to cover sewage treatment plants.

Not a power grab: "This is not a power grab, or anything like it." said County Commission's chairman, Jose "Pepe" Diaz, as he proposed legislation to strip Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** of her official role as the chief lobbyist for legislative priorities in Tallahassee and in Washington. Her replacement? Diaz. The county commission chair.

Stay well and we'd love to hear from you. Miami Herald Capitol Bureau Chief Mary Ellen Klas curated this newsletter. If you have any ideas or suggestions, please drop me a note at [*meklas@miamiherald.com*](mailto:meklas@miamiherald.com)

Special offer: The Miami Herald needs your support if we are to continue to supply the meaningful local journalism you count on during these unprecedented times. We've lowered our monthly rate for unlimited digital access to $.99 a month. Check it out!

Know someone who'd like to get this? Send this to a friend to receive our weekly newsletter on politics and policy.

**Load-Date:** March 22, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*COVID vaccine live updates: What you should know in South Florida on Monday, March 22*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:628D-19N1-JC3J-X008-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

March 22, 2021 Monday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** coronavirus

**Length:** 2597 words

**Byline:**  Michelle Marchante

Miami Herald

**Body**

***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** rules can be confusing in South Florida. Here's the latest news on where shots are available and who is eligible:

What's new today?

Florida's Department of Health on Monday announced 2,862 new confirmed cases of ***COVID***-19. The state also announced 39 new deaths. Of those who died, 37 were residents.

Good news for people 50 and older who became eligible for the ***vaccine*** Monday: The federally supported site at MDC North will continue to offer first-dose Pfizer shots this week instead of pivoting to second doses only, as was originally announced. The main FEMA sites in Tampa, Orlando and Jacksonville will also continue to offer first doses for a while longer.

Anyone 50 and older can now get a ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** in Florida. This is part of Gov. Ron DeSantis' new executive order, effective Monday, that drops the vaccination age requirement from 60 to 50.

Miami-Dade's county-run vaccination sites will open to anyone 40 and over on March 29, according to Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava***. County sites include Tropical Park, Zoo Miami and Homestead Sports Complex.

The City of Miami is opening applications to its Emergency Rental Assistance Program on March 29. Eligible renters can receive up to $24,000 in rent and living expenses aid.

South Florida's federally supported site at Miami Dade College's north campus and two pop-up sites that move across the county will stop giving first doses of the Pfizer ***vaccine*** soon and only give second doses.

Who can get ***COVID***-19 vaccines in Florida and who can't? Do you need proof of residency?

Florida is giving vaccines to healthcare workers, long-term care residents and staff and people 50 and older. Anyone under 60 who a physician determines is "extremely vulnerable" to ***COVID***-19 because of a preexisting medical condition can also get the ***vaccine***.

Keep in mind that people with high-risk conditions will need their physician to sign an "at-risk" form before they can get the ***vaccine***. The form can be downloaded at [*https://floridahealthcovid19.gov/*](https://floridahealthcovid19.gov/). Some hospitals may not accept the form because they have their own system in place or have additional requirements.

It's also worth noting that pre-K-12 school personnel and childcare workers can also get the ***vaccine*** at federal-run sites and pharmacies across the state.

Only Florida residents and snowbirds can get the ***vaccine***, but there is no county residency requirement in place. That means that if you live in Miami-Dade, you can get the ***vaccine*** in Broward, or vice versa. You will need to show proof of Florida residency.

For snowbirds or part-time residents, the proof needs to be in the form of two documents such as a lease agreement and a utility bill no more than two months old, according to the Florida Division of Emergency Management.

Anyone else who lives in another state or country can no longer get the ***vaccine*** in Florida. Nonresidents who have already received the first dose in Florida will still be able to get the second dose.

The change was made to curb ***vaccine*** tourism, or people who travel from another state or country to get the ***vaccine*** in Miami or another part of the state.

Who should not get a ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine***?

People who have had a severe allergic reaction to ingredients in the ***vaccine*** or had a severe reaction after a previous dose. Ingredients of the Pfizer-BioNTech ***vaccine***, the Moderna ***vaccine*** and the Johnson & Johnson ***vaccine*** can be found on FDA.gov.

How many people have received the ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** in Florida?

According to the state's Monday ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** report, 161,308 people have completed the Johnson & Johnson single dose ***vaccine*** and 2,578,959 people have completed the two-dose series of either Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna vaccines.

Of those who have been fully vaccinated, 630,331 were Miami-Dade residents, 436,431 were Broward residents, 378,724 were Palm Beach residents and 19,207 were Monroe residents.

What ***COVID***-19 vaccines are available in Florida? How many doses do I need?

Florida has three vaccines available: Pfizer-BioNTech, Moderna and Johnson & Johnson.

The Pfizer ***vaccine*** requires two shots, three weeks apart, and can be given to people 16 and older. Moderna's ***vaccine*** requires two shots, one month apart, and can be given to people 18 and older. Johnson & Johnson's is a single dose and can be given to people 18 and older.

The Pfizer and Moderna vaccines are not interchangeable, however, which means that if your first shot was the Pfizer ***vaccine***, your second shot cannot be the Moderna ***vaccine***, according to the CDC.

***COVID***-19 vaccination sites in South Florida?

Pharmacies:

The following pharmacies offer ***COVID***-19 vaccines in select stores by appointment-only:

Publix stores in Florida offer vaccines, although the website frequently says appointments are "fully booked." Visit publix.com/***covid-vaccine***/florida.

Navarro Discount Pharmacies and CVS y mas stores in Miami-Dade. Some traditional CVS stores across Florida also have doses. To check for availability, visit CVS.com or call customer service at 800-746-7287.

Some Winn-Dixie and Fresco y Mas stores offer vaccines in South Florida. For Winn-Dixie, visit winndixie.com/pharmacy/***covid-vaccine***. For Fresco y Mas, visit frescoymas.com/pharmacy/***covid-vaccine***.

Some Walmart and Sam's Club stores offer vaccines, including in Broward and Miami-Dade counties. To schedule a ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** appointment at Walmart, visit walmart.com/COVIDvaccine. For Sam's Clubs, visit samsclub.com/***covid***.

Some Walgreens stores offer vaccines, including in Palm Beach County. To check for availability visit [*https://www.walgreens.com/topic/promotion/****covid-vaccine****.jsp*](https://www.walgreens.com/topic/promotion/covid-vaccine.jsp)

Federally supported site in Miami-Dade

Miami Dade College North campus is the first federally supported vaccination site to open in South Florida. Appointments are not required, but they are recommended. The site is open every day from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. and is a walk-up, which means people wait in line instead of in their car. Anyone who would prefer to book an appointment, visit myvaccine.fl.gov.

Anyone who lives in Florida and falls under the state's ***vaccine*** criteria can get the ***vaccine*** at MDC North. This includes people with at risk conditions who have an "at risk" form signed by their physician. A doctor's note is also accepted. Pre-K-12th grade school employees and childcare workers can also get the ***vaccine***.

The FEMA pop-up sites are at Charles Hadley Park in Liberty City and at the South Miami-Dade Cultural Arts Center in Cutler Bay. The sites will run from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. every day until March 23. The sites will then return to Sweetwater and Florida City to administer second-dose Pfizer shots. You can just show up because the sites don't take appointments.

MDC North and the two pop-up sites later this week will stop giving first-dose Pfizer and will only do second doses.

Preregister for an appointment in Miami-Dade and Broward counties

People 50 and older, healthcare workers with direct patient contact, and people deemed by their physician to be "extremely vulnerable" to ***COVID***-19 can preregister for an appointment in Florida through a statewide website and phone system. Long-term care residents and staff can preregister, too.

The website is myvaccine.fl.gov. You can also pre-register by phone. To find the designated number for your county, visit floridahealthcovid19.gov.

Anyone who preregisters for a ***vaccine*** appointment will be notified when slots become available at state-supported or federally supported vaccination sites in their county, according to the Florida Division of Emergency Management, which is tasked with the state's ***vaccine*** distribution. Once you get an appointment, you will need to show proof that you are a Florida resident.

State-run sites in Miami-Dade County include Hard Rock Stadium in Miami Gardens and Marlins Park in Miami.

State-run sites in Broward County include Snyder Park in Fort Lauderdale, Coral Square Mall in Coral Springs, Markham Park in Sunrise, Tree Tops Park in Davie, Trade Winds Park in Coconut Creek and Central Regional Park in Lauderhill, and Broward College's Coconut Creek campus.

Keep in mind that people under 60 with high-risk conditions will need their physician to sign an "at-risk" form before they can get the ***vaccine***. The form can be downloaded at floridahealthcovid19.gov.

Florida residents who do not meet the priority criteria can also sign up to receive email updates to learn when they will be eligible to receive the ***vaccine***.

Hospitals and other ***COVID***-19 vaccination sites in Miami-Dade, Broward

MIA\_VACCINES-ROLEMODELEDUCATORS-Local0139JAI.JPGMiami, Florida, March 15, 2021 - A nurse prepares a dose of the Moderna ***Covid***-19 ***vaccine*** at the Frederica Wilson/Juanita Mann Health Center. Congresswoman Wilson hosted a press conference at the Frederica Wilson/Juanita Mann Health Center , 2520 NW 75th st., Miami, during which Miami-Dade Public Schools 5000 Role Models of Excellence Project educators received vaccinations. The hope is that if members of the Black and Latino communities see people like them get the ***Covid***-19 ***vaccine***, they will in turn go out and get vaccinated.

Miami-Dade County:

The county has a website, miamidade.gov/***vaccine***, where it posts updates on where seniors and eventually the rest of the general public, will be able to find and schedule ***COVID***-19 vaccination appointments.

People 50 and older and healthcare workers with direct patient contact can book a slot through the portal. So can law enforcement, firefighters and pre-k-12 school personnel of all ages. Long-term care residents and staff can preregister, too.

Anyone under 50 considered by their physician to be "extremely vulnerable" to ***COVID***-19 will also be able to schedule a slot. Everyone who books a slot will need to show proof of Florida residency.

If you are a healthcare worker, law enforcement, firefighter or an educator, you will also need to show proof of employment with a badge, ID or paystub. People under 50 with an at risk condition will need to show a physician-signed "at risk" form that can be downloaded from the Florida Department of Health's website or from the county's online portal.

County-run sites include Zoo Miami, Tropical Park and the Homestead Sports Complex. You can also call 305-614-2014 to preregister.

Florida residents who don't qualify for the ***vaccine*** yet can also sign up through the website to be given updates on the county's vaccination process.

Here are other places that have vaccines. Some locations may be vaccinating specific groups from Florida's priority list so check the location's website for details.

Community Medical Group is offering doses at its Miami center, 1490 NW 27th Ave., and Florida City center, 751 West Palm Drive. Walk-ups are accepted on Saturdays and to schedule an appointment call 786-667-3167.

Bucky Dent Park, 2250 W. 60th St., in Hialeah. Anyone who meets Florida's ***vaccine*** criteria can get a shot here. No appointments are needed. You will wait standing in line, instead of in your car. The site is open daily from 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. or until supplies run out.

Overtown Youth Center, 1551 NW First Ave, is open from 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.. The state-run site does not require appointments. You will wait standing in line, instead of in your car. You must fall into one of Florida's priority groups to get the ***vaccine***.

Oak Grove Park, 690 NE 159th St. is open from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. The state-run site does not require appointments. You will wait standing in line, instead of in your car. You must fall into one of Florida's priority groups to get the ***vaccine***.

Homebound seniors can email their name and phone number to [*HomeboundVaccine@em.myflorida.com*](mailto:HomeboundVaccine@em.myflorida.com) and someone will get back to you about setting up an appointment. You can also call 866-779-6121 to schedule an appointment.

Jackson Health System, the county's public hospital network. To check for available appointments, visit [*https://jhsmiami.org/comvac/*](https://jhsmiami.org/comvac/).

Mount Sinai Medical Center in Miami Beach is no longer booking appointments and has canceled all first-dose appointments for Jan. 23 and later because of supply constraints. Second-dose appointments are not affected. To check for updates, visit msmc.com/coronavirus-update/

Baptist Health is one of the county's largest private hospitals. To check for updates, visit Baptisthealth.net/***vaccine***.

Seniors who seek care with Leon Medical Centers can call customer service at 305-642-5366 to schedule a free ***COVID***-19 vaccination appointment. If you need transportation, let the operator know so they can also schedule a driver to pick you up. Appointments will be scheduled until Leon runs out of vaccines.

Jessie Trice Community Health System is offering vaccines to people eligible under Florida's guidelines. To check for available appointments, call 305-637-6400.

Nicklaus Children's Hospital is offering vaccines to young adults ages 16 to 21 who are being treated for certain high-risk medical conditions. To check for slots, visit Nicklauschildrens.org/Covid19Vaccine.

All veterans in Miami-Dade, Broward and Monroe counties who are patients of the Miami VA Healthcare System can get the ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine***, regardless of age and medical condition. You must be enrolled and eligible for VA healthcare benefits. Some of the sites require appointments, other locations accept walk-ins. Veterans who want to make an appointment can call 305-575-7000 or contact their care team. To learn more, visit [*https://www.miami.va.gov/services/****covid****-19-vaccines.asp*](https://www.miami.va.gov/services/covid-19-vaccines.asp)

Broward County:

Holy Cross Health in Fort Lauderdale is offering ***COVID***-19 vaccines to people under 65 who have certain medical conditions that make them at risk for severe ***COVID*** complications. Priority will be given to Holy Cross Medical Group patients, the hospital said. For details on how to request an appointment, visit [*www.holy-cross.com/covidvaccine*](http://www.holy-cross.com/covidvaccine).

Broward Health, to check for appointments, visit [*https://www.browardhealth.org/pages/being-healthy-****vaccine***](https://www.browardhealth.org/pages/being-healthy-vaccine)

Fort Lauderdale's Inter Miami CF Stadium is a ***COVID***-19 vaccination site. Appointments for this site are also booked through BrowardHealth.org

Memorial Healthcare System ran out of ***COVID***-19 vaccines. Once doses are available again, appointments can be made through the MyChart portal, [*https://mychart.mhs.net*](https://mychart.mhs.net) for current Memorial Healthcare patients. Others will have to call 954-276-4340.

The appointment-only ***vaccine*** locations listed in the website above are:

The Memorial Regional Conference Center, 3501 Johnson St. in Hollywood, noon to 7:30 p.m. Mondays, 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Tuesday through Friday.

Memorial Specialty Pharmacy, 9581 Premier Pkwy. in Miramar, 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Monday through Saturday.

Certain high-risk 16- and 17-year-old patients at Joe DiMaggio Children's Hospital may also be eligible for the ***vaccine***. Appointments can be scheduled through their MyChart account.

All Cleveland Clinic Florida locations, including its Weston campus, have run out of vaccination appointments for now. Cleveland Clinic said it will resume scheduling appointments through its website for current patients once it gets more doses. To check for slots, visit [*https://my.clevelandclinic.org/landing/****covid****-19-****vaccine****/florida*](https://my.clevelandclinic.org/landing/covid-19-vaccine/florida)

***COVID***-19 vaccines in Monroe County?

More places are offering the ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** in the Florida Keys.

Eligible Florida residents can now get vaccinated at Winn-Dixie stores in Key West and Tavernier, and at all Publix stores along the island chain. Appointments are required.

For Winn-Dixie, check [*https://www.winndixie.com/pharmacy/****covid-vaccine***](https://www.winndixie.com/pharmacy/covid-vaccine). For Publix, check [*https://www.publix.com/****covid-vaccine****/florida*](https://www.publix.com/covid-vaccine/florida).

**Load-Date:** March 23, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Citing slowdown, Miami-Dade opening its vaccination sites to 40+ on March 29*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:627S-S541-JC3J-X54H-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

March 19, 2021 Friday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** miami\_dade

**Length:** 631 words

**Byline:**  Douglas Hanks and Michelle Marchante

Miami Herald

**Body**

Miami-Dade's county-run vaccination sites will open to anyone 40 and over on March 29, Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** said Friday, setting up a more permissive criteria than what Gov. Ron DeSantis has so far allowed.

The news still gives Florida a week to match -- or exceed -- Miami-Dade's invitation to younger residents to get vaccinated. DeSantis on Friday said he was moving the statewide age limit to 50 and above on Monday and planned to continue lowering the age restrictions in the coming weeks. Levine Cava said county sites would also open to 50 and over on Monday, and would always be at least as permissive as the state rules.

Miami-Dade runs three appointment-only vaccination sites, at Tropical Park, Zoo Miami and the Homestead Sports Complex. People of any age can sign up for the waiting list at miamidade.gov/***vaccine***.

Levine Cava is the second mayor of a large county to announce its own age restrictions, breaking away from the state rules that had previously set the standard for most local sites. Orange County Mayor Jerry Demings said Thursday that the county-run vaccination site at the local convention center would vaccinate anyone 40 and over starting Monday.

DeSantis pushed back against Demings in remarks at a morning press conference, held before the Levine Cava announcement.

"It's not his decision to make," the governor said. "There's a structure in the state of Florida in terms of how these decisions are made."

At a morning briefing with county commissioners, Levine Cava laid out her own plan to open county sites to all adults by the middle of April. She said the county age limit would drop by 10 years every seven days, which would make it 20 and above on April 12.

President Joe Biden has called for states to make vaccines available to all adults by May 1.

A combination of state sites (Hard Rock Stadium, Marlins Park) and federally supported sites (Miami Dade College North), hospitals, pharmacies and the county's sites are vaccinating about 18,000 people per day, according to state figures. That's more than double the 8,500 vaccination daily pace set a month ago. The pace began hitting a plateau about a week ago, and walk-up sites at MDC North and federal-supported neighborhood locations reported less turnout than in prior weeks.

"I believe we have reached a turning point in our vaccination efforts," Levine Cava said. "We need to aggressively expand ***vaccine*** eligibility to more adults. ... It's critical that no available vaccines go unused."

At the briefing, Chairman Jose "Pepe" Diaz cautioned Levine Cava, the first Democrat elected mayor in 20 years, against breaking with DeSantis, the state's top Republican, on vaccination strategy.

"Let's be very cautious," said Diaz, a Republican and DeSantis ally. "He is the governor."

Starting Monday, people eligible for the ***vaccine*** in Florida include anyone 50 and older. Previous additional state criteria remain in effect, too: healthcare workers with direct patient contact, long-term care facility residents and staff, and anyone deemed by a physician to be "extremely vulnerable" to ***COVID***-19 because of a preexisting medical condition.

DeSantis hasn't lowered the age restrictions for teachers, school staff and childcare workers. Pre-K-12 school personnel, no matter their age, can get vaccinated at county-run sites and pharmacies participating in the federal ***vaccine*** program. Those include Publix, Walmart, Winn-Dixie and CVS.

The federally supported vaccination centers -- MDC North and walk-up satellite sites in Charles Hadley Park in Liberty City and the South Miami-Dade Cultural Arts Center in Cutler Bay -- also offer vaccinations for pre-K-12th grade teachers, school staff and childcare workers of any age.

Miami Herald staff writer Mary Ellen Klas contributed to this report.

**Load-Date:** March 20, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Banned from U.S., Royal Caribbean Group to start Bahamas, St. Maarten cruises in June*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:627X-SBG1-JC3J-X0JY-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

March 19, 2021 Friday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** tourism\_cruises

**Length:** 733 words

**Byline:**  Taylor Dolven

Miami Herald

**Body**

With the cruise industry shut down in the U.S. for the foreseeable future, Royal Caribbean Group is turning to the Caribbean for its North America restart in June.

Its Celebrity Millennium cruise ship will start seven-night cruises from St. Maarten on June 5, and its Adventure of the Seas ship will start seven-night cruises from Nassau, The Bahamas, on June 12. All crew and passengers older than 18 will be required to be vaccinated against ***COVID***-19; those under 18 will need to provide proof of a negative ***COVID***-19 test result within 72 hours of boarding.

"The vaccines are clearly a game changer for all of us, and with the number of vaccinations and their impact growing rapidly, we believe starting with cruises for vaccinated adult guests and crew is the right choice," said Royal Caribbean International CEO Michael Bayley in a statement. "As we move forward, we expect this requirement and other measures will inevitably evolve over time."

The company is still determining whether it will require crew and passengers to wear masks and how full the ships will be.

"We are not sailing until June and we know much can change between now and then," said Royal Caribbean International spokesperson Lyan Sierra-Caro via email. "We will continue to follow the science and the data."

MIA\_02CORONAVIRUSDAILY (1).JPGUnder gray skies crew members walk the upper deck of Royal Caribbean's Majesty of the Seas cruise ship docked at PortMiami on Thursday, May 14, 2020.

The Celebrity Millennium cruises will visit Aruba, Curaçao and Barbados on one itinerary and Tortola, St. Lucia and Barbados on another. The Adventure of the Seas cruises will visit Royal Caribbean's private island in the Bahamas, Grand Bahama Island and Cozumel, Mexico.

This time last year, Caribbean countries shut their ports to cruise ships for fear that infected passengers would overwhelm their finite health resources. At times, infected cruise passengers and crew made up large portions of islands' total case counts. Cruise outbreaks led to at least 111 crew and passenger deaths and affected 87 ships, according to a Miami Herald investigation.

After a five-and-a-half month cruise ban in the U.S., in October the CDC published a "conditional sail order," the agency's framework for restarting in the U.S. Phase one of the order requires companies to test crew members for ***COVID***-19 weekly and report results to the agency. There are still some companies with ships in U.S. waters that have not complied with phase one of the order, according to agency spokesperson Caitlin Shockey. Once phase one is completed, the companies will move into phase two: securing agreements with local health authorities and ports.

The CDC's October order, published before the ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** distribution began, includes some requirements that go beyond what Royal Caribbean Group is planning for its Caribbean cruises, including PCR testing for all passengers and crew on embarkation and disembarkation days. It also requires companies to publicize CDC cruise travel warnings in all marketing materials and end cruises immediately in the case of an outbreak.

The CDC currently has a Level 4 warning against cruise travel -- the agency's highest -- and "recommends that all people avoid travel on cruise ships, including river cruises, worldwide, because the risk of ***COVID***-19 on cruise ships is very high." Sierra-Caro, the Royal Caribbean International spokesperson, said via email that the company's outbreak response plan includes "swift containment, contact tracing, enhanced medical capabilities on board and support on land with health care providers and destination partners."

dlc cdc tweet

On a Thursday letter to CDC Director Rochelle Walensky, Miami-Dade Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** encouraged the agency to allow cruises in the U.S. by July 4 and said PortMiami is working on getting a permanent ***COVID***-19 testing lab up and running.

Meanwhile, lines are moving ahead just south of U.S. waters. Miami-based Crystal Cruises also plans to start seven-night, all-Bahamas cruises from Nassau and Bimini in July for vaccinated passengers.

The last attempt at cruising in the Caribbean -- last fall -- didn't last. Seven passengers and two crew members tested positive for ***COVID***-19 aboard the SeaDream 1 in November, with just 53 passengers on board. The sick were evacuated to hospitals in Barbados, and SeaDream canceled all remaining cruises for 2020.

**Load-Date:** March 20, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*COVID vaccine live updates: What you should know in South Florida on Friday, March 19*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:627S-3SX1-JC3J-X4F8-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

March 19, 2021 Friday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** coronavirus

**Length:** 2789 words

**Byline:**  Michelle Marchante

Miami Herald

**Body**

***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** rules can be confusing in South Florida. Here's the latest news on where shots are available and who is eligible:

What's new today?

The City of Miami is opening applications to its Emergency Rental Assistance Program on Monday. Eligible renters can receive up to $24,000 in rent and living expenses aid.

Miami-Dade's county-run vaccination sites will open to anyone 40 and over on March 29, Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** said Friday. County sites include Tropical Park, Zoo Miami and Homestead Sports Complex.

Starting Monday, anyone 50 and older will be able to get a ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** in Florida, said Gov. Ron DeSantis. Orange County Mayor Jerry Demings says he will lower the age criteria more and will be allowing anyone 40 and older to schedule a vaccination at the Orange County Convention Center in Orlando.

South Florida's federally supported site at Miami Dade College's north campus and two pop-up sites that move across the county will stop giving first doses of the Pfizer ***vaccine*** next week, and only give second doses.

Pfizer, Moderna or Johnson & Johnson? Finding a site that has a dose available can be a challenge. We have made a list that breaks down South Florida sites by ***vaccine***, so you can find the one you want.

Miami-Dade police will resume fining people who don't wear masks and violate ***curfew***. Meanwhile, Key West has stopped citing people who violate the city's ***mask*** law.

Baptist Health of South Florida offered ***COVID***-19 vaccines to its top donors via email on New Year's Day. That's about a week before it launched a website for seniors in the general public to secure a ***vaccine*** appointment.

Who can get ***COVID***-19 vaccines in Florida and who can't? Do you need proof of residency?

Florida is giving vaccines to healthcare workers, long-term care residents and staff and people 60 and older. Sworn law enforcement officers, firefighters and K-12 school personnel ages 50 and older are also eligible for the ***vaccine***. Anyone under 60 who a physician determines is "extremely vulnerable" to ***COVID***-19 because of a preexisting medical condition can also get the ***vaccine***.

Keep in mind that people with high-risk conditions will need their physician to sign an "at-risk" form before they can get the ***vaccine***. The form can be downloaded at [*https://floridahealthcovid19.gov/*](https://floridahealthcovid19.gov/). Some hospitals may not accept the form because they have their own system in place or have additional requirements.

It's also worth noting that pre-K-12 school personnel and childcare workers can also get the ***vaccine*** at federal-run sites and pharmacies across the state.

Only Florida residents and snowbirds can get the ***vaccine***, but there is no county residency requirement in place. That means that if you live in Miami-Dade, you can get the ***vaccine*** in Broward, or vice versa. You will need to show proof of Florida residency.

For snowbirds or part-time residents, the proof needs to be in the form of two documents such as a lease agreement and a utility bill no more than two months old, according to the Florida Division of Emergency Management.

Anyone else who lives in another state or country can no longer get the ***vaccine*** in Florida. Nonresidents who have already received the first dose in Florida will still be able to get the second dose.

The change was made to curb ***vaccine*** tourism, or people who travel from another state or country to get the ***vaccine*** in Miami or another part of the state.

Who should not get a ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine***?

People who have had a severe allergic reaction to ingredients in the ***vaccine*** or had a severe reaction after a previous dose. Ingredients of the Pfizer-BioNTech ***vaccine***, the Moderna ***vaccine*** and the Johnson & Johnson ***vaccine*** can be found on FDA.gov.

How many people have received the ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** in Florida?

According to the state's Thursday ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** report, 130,875 people have completed the Johnson and Johnson single dose ***vaccine*** and 2,422,990 people have completed the two-dose series of either Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna vaccines.

Of those who have been fully vaccinated, 275,229 were Miami-Dade residents, 218,221 were Broward residents, 238,575 were Palm Beach residents and 9,784 were Monroe residents.

What ***COVID***-19 vaccines are available in Florida? How many doses do I need?

Florida has three vaccines available: Pfizer-BioNTech, Moderna and Johnson & Johnson.

The Pfizer ***vaccine*** requires two shots, three weeks apart, and can be given to people 16 and older. Moderna's ***vaccine*** requires two shots, one month apart, and can be given to people 18 and older. Johnson & Johnson's is a single dose and can be given to people 18 and older.

The Pfizer and Moderna vaccines are not interchangeable, however, which means that if your first shot was the Pfizer ***vaccine***, your second shot cannot be the Moderna ***vaccine***, according to the CDC.

***COVID***-19 vaccination sites in South Florida?

Pharmacies:

The following pharmacies offer ***COVID***-19 vaccines in select stores by appointment-only:

Publix stores in Florida offer vaccines, although the website frequently says appointments are "fully booked." Visit publix.com/***covid-vaccine***/florida.

Navarro Discount Pharmacies and CVS y mas stores in Miami-Dade. Some traditional CVS stores across Florida also have doses. To check for availability, visit CVS.com or call customer service at 800-746-7287.

Some Winn-Dixie and Fresco y Mas stores offer vaccines in South Florida. For Winn-Dixie, visit winndixie.com/pharmacy/***covid-vaccine***. For Fresco y Mas, visit frescoymas.com/pharmacy/***covid-vaccine***.

Some Walmart and Sam's Club stores offer vaccines, including in Broward and Miami-Dade counties. To schedule a ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** appointment at Walmart, visit walmart.com/COVIDvaccine. For Sam's Clubs, visit samsclub.com/***covid***.

Some Walgreens stores offer vaccines, including in Palm Beach County. To check for availability visit [*https://www.walgreens.com/topic/promotion/****covid-vaccine****.jsp*](https://www.walgreens.com/topic/promotion/covid-vaccine.jsp)

Federally supported site in Miami-Dade

Miami Dade College North campus is the first federally supported vaccination site to open in South Florida. Appointments are not required, but they are recommended. The site is open every day from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. and is a walk-up, which means people wait in line instead of in their car. Anyone who would prefer to book an appointment, visit myvaccine.fl.gov.

Anyone who lives in Florida and falls under the state's ***vaccine*** criteria can get the ***vaccine*** at MDC North. This includes people with at risk conditions who have an "at risk" form signed by their physician. A doctor's note is also accepted. Pre-K-12th grade school employees and childcare workers can also get the ***vaccine***.

FEMA pop-up sites open Thursday at Charles Hadley Park in Liberty City and at the South Miami-Dade Cultural Arts Center in Cutler Bay. The sites will run from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. every day until March 23. You can just show up because the sites don't take appointments.

Starting next week, MDC North and the two pop-up sites, that are set to return to Sweetwater and Florida City, will stop administering first-dose Pfizer ***vaccine*** and will only do second doses.

Preregister for an appointment in Miami-Dade and Broward counties

People 60 and older, healthcare workers with direct patient contact, and people deemed by their physician to be "extremely vulnerable" to ***COVID***-19 can preregister for an appointment in Florida through a statewide website and phone system. K-12 school personnel, sworn law enforcement and firefighters ages 50 and older are also eligible. Long-term care residents and staff can preregister, too.

The website is myvaccine.fl.gov. You can also pre-register by phone. To find the designated number for your county, visit floridahealthcovid19.gov.

Anyone who preregisters for a ***vaccine*** appointment will be notified when slots become available at state-supported or federally supported vaccination sites in their county, according to the Florida Division of Emergency Management, which is tasked with the state's ***vaccine*** distribution. Once you get an appointment, you will need to show proof that you are a Florida resident.

State-run sites in Miami-Dade County include Hard Rock Stadium in Miami Gardens and Marlins Park in Miami.

State-run sites in Broward County include Snyder Park in Fort Lauderdale, Coral Square Mall in Coral Springs, Markham Park in Sunrise, Tree Tops Park in Davie, Trade Winds Park in Coconut Creek and Central Regional Park in Lauderhill, and Broward College's Coconut Creek campus.

Keep in mind that people under 60 with high-risk conditions will need their physician to sign an "at-risk" form before they can get the ***vaccine***. The form can be downloaded at [*https://floridahealthcovid19.gov/*](https://floridahealthcovid19.gov/).

Florida residents who do not meet the priority criteria can also sign up to receive email updates to learn when they will be eligible to receive the ***vaccine***.

Hospitals and other ***COVID***-19 vaccination sites in Miami-Dade, Broward

MIA\_VACCINES-ROLEMODELEDUCATORS-Local0139JAI.JPGMiami, Florida, March 15, 2021 - A nurse prepares a dose of the Moderna ***Covid***-19 ***vaccine*** at the Frederica Wilson/Juanita Mann Health Center. Congresswoman Wilson hosted a press conference at the Frederica Wilson/Juanita Mann Health Center , 2520 NW 75th st., Miami, during which Miami-Dade Public Schools 5000 Role Models of Excellence Project educators received vaccinations. The hope is that if members of the Black and Latino communities see people like them get the ***Covid***-19 ***vaccine***, they will in turn go out and get vaccinated.

Miami-Dade County:

The county has a website, miamidade.gov/***vaccine***, where it posts updates on where seniors and eventually the rest of the general public, will be able to find and schedule ***COVID***-19 vaccination appointments.

People 60 and older and healthcare workers with direct patient contact can book a slot through the portal. So can law enforcement, firefighters and pre-k-12 school personnel of all ages. Long-term care residents and staff can preregister, too.

Anyone under 60 considered by their physician to be "extremely vulnerable" to ***COVID***-19 will also be able to schedule a slot. Everyone who books a slot will need to show proof of Florida residency.

If you are a healthcare worker, law enforcement, firefighter or an educator, you will also need to show proof of employment with a badge, ID or paystub. People under 60 with an at risk condition will need to show a physician-signed "at risk" form that can be downloaded from the Florida Department of Health's website or from the county's online portal.

County-run sites include Zoo Miami, Tropical Park and the Homestead Sports Complex. You can also call 305-614-2014 to preregister.

Florida residents who don't qualify for the ***vaccine*** yet can also sign up through the website to be given updates on the county's vaccination process.

Here are other places that have vaccines. Some locations may be vaccinating specific groups from Florida's priority list so check the location's website for details.

South Miami Children's Clinic on Saturday will be hosting a ***COVID***-19 vaccination event from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. The clinic is at 6701 SW 58th Pl. People 60 and older and others who meet Florida's ***vaccine*** criteria can pre-register for an appointment by texting Dr. Tina Carroll-Scott at 305-962-2094 or by email at [*flascotts@bellsouth.net*](mailto:flascotts@bellsouth.net) After a screening, you will be placed on a list and someone will contact you to schedule a time.

People under 60 with at risk conditions will need to show a physician-signed at risk form to get vaccinated. Since not everyone has a doctor, there will be physicians at the site on Saturday to give health assessments. Flagging problems with blood pressure and weight could help people with at-risk conditions, such as obesity or diabetes, get the required signed form right there.

Community Medical Group is offering doses at its Miami center, 1490 NW 27th Ave., and Florida City center, 751 West Palm Drive. Walk-ups are accepted on Saturdays and to schedule an appointment call 786-667-3167.

Bucky Dent Park, 2250 W. 60th St., in Hialeah. Anyone who meets Florida's ***vaccine*** criteria can get a shot here. No appointments are needed. You will wait standing in line, instead of in your car. The site is open daily from 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. or until supplies run out.

Overtown Youth Center, 1551 NW First Ave, is open from 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.. The state-run site does not require appointments. You will wait standing in line, instead of in your car. You must fall into one of Florida's priority groups to get the ***vaccine***.

Oak Grove Park, 690 NE 159th St. is open from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. The state-run site does not require appointments. You will wait standing in line, instead of in your car. You must fall into one of Florida's priority groups to get the ***vaccine***.

Homebound seniors can email their name and phone number to [*HomeboundVaccine@em.myflorida.com*](mailto:HomeboundVaccine@em.myflorida.com) and someone will get back to you about setting up an appointment.

Jackson Health System, the county's public hospital network. To check for available appointments, visit [*https://jhsmiami.org/comvac/*](https://jhsmiami.org/comvac/).

Mount Sinai Medical Center in Miami Beach is no longer booking appointments and has canceled all first-dose appointments for Jan. 23 and later because of supply constraints. Second-dose appointments are not affected. To check for updates, visit msmc.com/coronavirus-update/

Baptist Health is one of the county's largest private hospitals. To check for updates, visit Baptisthealth.net/***vaccine***.

Seniors who seek care with Leon Medical Centers can call customer service at 305-642-5366 to schedule a free ***COVID***-19 vaccination appointment. If you need transportation, let the operator know so they can also schedule a driver to pick you up. Appointments will be scheduled until Leon runs out of vaccines.

Jessie Trice Community Health System is offering vaccines to people eligible under Florida's guidelines. To check for available appointments, call 305-637-6400.

Nicklaus Children's Hospital is offering vaccines to young adults ages 16 to 21 who are being treated for certain high-risk medical conditions. To check for slots, visit Nicklauschildrens.org/Covid19Vaccine.

All veterans in Miami-Dade, Broward and Monroe counties who are patients of the Miami VA Healthcare System can get the ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine***, regardless of age and medical condition. You must be enrolled and eligible for VA healthcare benefits. Some of the sites require appointments, other locations accept walk-ins. Veterans who want to make an appointment can call 305-575-7000 or contact their care team. To learn more, visit [*https://www.miami.va.gov/services/****covid****-19-vaccines.asp*](https://www.miami.va.gov/services/covid-19-vaccines.asp)

Broward County:

Holy Cross Health in Fort Lauderdale is offering ***COVID***-19 vaccines to people under 65 who have certain medical conditions that make them at risk for severe ***COVID*** complications. Priority will be given to Holy Cross Medical Group patients, the hospital said. For details on how to request an appointment, visit [*www.holy-cross.com/covidvaccine*](http://www.holy-cross.com/covidvaccine).

Broward Health, to check for appointments, visit [*https://www.browardhealth.org/pages/being-healthy-****vaccine***](https://www.browardhealth.org/pages/being-healthy-vaccine)

Fort Lauderdale's Inter Miami CF Stadium is a ***COVID***-19 vaccination site. Appointments for this site are also booked through BrowardHealth.org

Memorial Healthcare System ran out of ***COVID***-19 vaccines. Once doses are available again, appointments can be made through the MyChart portal, [*https://mychart.mhs.net*](https://mychart.mhs.net) for current Memorial Healthcare patients. Others will have to call 954-276-4340.

The appointment-only ***vaccine*** locations listed in the website above are:

The Memorial Regional Conference Center, 3501 Johnson St. in Hollywood, noon to 7:30 p.m. Mondays, 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Tuesday through Friday.

Memorial Specialty Pharmacy, 9581 Premier Pkwy. in Miramar, 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Monday through Saturday.

Certain high-risk 16- and 17-year-old patients at Joe DiMaggio Children's Hospital may also be eligible for the ***vaccine***. Appointments can be scheduled through their MyChart account.

All Cleveland Clinic Florida locations, including its Weston campus, have run out of vaccination appointments for now. Cleveland Clinic said it will resume scheduling appointments through its website for current patients once it gets more doses. To check for slots, visit [*https://my.clevelandclinic.org/landing/****covid****-19-****vaccine****/florida*](https://my.clevelandclinic.org/landing/covid-19-vaccine/florida)

***COVID***-19 vaccines in Monroe County?

More places are offering the ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** in the Florida Keys.

Eligible Florida residents can now get vaccinated at Winn-Dixie stores in Key West and Tavernier, and at all Publix stores along the island chain. Appointments are required.

For Winn-Dixie, check [*https://www.winndixie.com/pharmacy/****covid-vaccine***](https://www.winndixie.com/pharmacy/covid-vaccine). For Publix, check [*https://www.publix.com/****covid-vaccine****/florida*](https://www.publix.com/covid-vaccine/florida).

**Load-Date:** March 22, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*With Florida requiring doctor's note for many, pace of COVID vaccination slows in Miami*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:627G-5JD1-JC3J-X1B1-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

March 17, 2021 Wednesday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** coronavirus

**Length:** 1111 words

**Byline:**  Ben Conarck and Devoun Cetoute

Miami Herald

**Body**

In Florida's most populous county of Miami-Dade, the pace of ***COVID*** vaccination has slowed, with state-run mega sites following a strict rule book enforced by armed police or other security officers at the entrance.

Throughout March, ***vaccine*** supply has increased but strict age minimums issued by Gov. Ron DeSantis have lingered, except for medically vulnerable people, who are required to have a physician to sign off to qualify for a shot.

Other documentation requirements have posed their own challenges. In the waning days of the federally supported pop-up ***vaccine*** site in North Miami Beach, one 86-year-old woman was turned away for not having the appropriate proof of Florida residency.

Undocumented people, such as the farm workers DeSantis blamed for ***COVID*** spikes in June, might see uniformed police and avoid the vaccination sites in the first place, public health experts said. And despite having the fourth-highest rate of people going without health insurance in the country (14% before the pandemic), Florida has implemented a rigid policy of requiring doctor's notes for the medically vulnerable all while keeping age requirements in place well into March.

Beyond slowing the pace, Alison Yager, executive director of the nonprofit Florida Health Justice Project, said the policies have the potential to create large pockets of unvaccinated people.

"Any step that we take that broadcasts a message of exclusivity and unwelcomeness and regimentation -- we are immediately saying to lots of people: 'This place is not for you. This place holds certain dangers,' and instead we should be throwing the doors wide open," Yager said.

The state doctor's note policy has been enforced at all of the federally supported, state-run vaccination sites in Miami-Dade, where about four out of 10 people don't have regular access to healthcare, according to a local survey. Uniformed police patrol the sites, which have been established in areas where many undocumented people work and live.

Though the policies are meant to safeguard the ***vaccine*** from medical tourism or bad actors who would fake medical conditions in order to jump the line, they could also be responsible for slowing the pace of vaccination in South Florida, where the state-run mega-sites have seen traffic dwindle in recent weeks, public health experts said.

They've also spurred Instagram ads and social media postings from physicians looking to cash in on the rush for a ***vaccine***, with prices ranging from $100 to $400 for telehealth visits, aimed at luring people without doctors.

Meanwhile, local health clinics for under-insured or uninsured people contacted by the Miami Herald said they were accepting new patients to come in and be evaluated for potential eligibility for the ***vaccine***, but virtually all of them were charging for the service.

Neither the governor's office nor Department of Health took a position on whether it allows or discourages doctors from charging uninsured people for the ***vaccine*** forms when asked by the Miami Herald.

A health department spokesperson responded only that physicians were subject to regulation by the agency and that it would review any complaints filed against providers charging for the ***vaccine***.

The seven-day average of people receiving their first ***vaccine*** doses in Miami-Dade peaked on March 11 at just under 6,200, according to county data. By Monday, March 15, the average had dropped to about 5,700 per day.

NMB\_fitted.jpegThere was no line Monday morning at a FEMA-supported vaccination site in North Miami Beach.

Overall, vaccinations continue to hit records in Miami-Dade. With second doses added in, on March 13 the daily average crossed the 10,000-per day mark for the first time. That's more than the pace set during the lull in supply Miami-Dade saw in late February, when total vaccinations averaged fewer than 4,000 per day, according to daily vaccination data published by Miami-Dade.

Daily state reports for Miami-Dade typically show higher vaccination volume. It's not clear why the two sets of numbers differ.

Calls for easing restrictions go unheeded

As vaccination site traffic has ebbed at Miami-Dade's mega sites, Miami-Dade Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** has repeatedly called on the governor to expand eligibility and has lifted restrictions at county-run ***vaccine*** sites, going against state rules.

In regards to the policy requiring a doctor's consent to vaccinate medically vulnerable people, public health officials have countered that government officials should avoid policies that set up barriers to access for low-income people.

One alternative to requiring doctor's notes, for example, is "self-attestation" or "self-verification," essentially trusting people to tell the truth about their medical conditions and taking them at their word.

That policy has already been adopted by Jackson Health System, Miami-Dade's public hospital, which abandoned a similar doctor's note policy after hearing feedback that it was too onerous for low-income residents.

By keeping stricter policies in place even as supply deepens, the state of Florida is slowing down its vaccination efforts and losing ground in a race against quick-spreading ***COVID*** variants taking hold, public health experts say.

That is especially urgent in Florida, a national hot spot for variant growth. Dr. Rebecca Weintraub, an assistant professor in the Department of Global Health and Social Medicine at Harvard Medical School, has been advocating for self-attestation since January.

"The idea is to lower the fence for equity, not add process steps," Weintraub said. "The whole point of vaccinating the public as fast as possible is we decrease the virus' ability to replicate in the community, decrease the variants and maximize the ability of the ***vaccine***."

DeSantis issued the executive order in early March requiring medically vulnerable people under the age minimum -- dropped from 65 to 60 this week -- to fill out a Florida Department of Health form signed by a physician to get access to the ***vaccine***.

If someone on the margins of healthcare access were to decide the price of $100 for an appointment was worth it, Yager said, they would still have to find time to set up an appointment at a clinic that is likely overwhelmed itself, find the time off work, and get to the doctor.

"Then, after having gone through all of that just to get the form, one still has to go through the process of finding a vaccination appointment," Yager said. "So that's only Part A of a two-step process, and we already know Part B is itself full of hurdles to access."

Miami Herald Staff Writer Douglas Hanks and Miami Herald/El Nuevo Herald Staff Writer Jimena Tavel contributed to this report.

**Load-Date:** March 17, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*COVID vaccine live updates: What you should know in South Florida on Wednesday, March 17*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:627B-5D91-DYJM-M17X-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

March 17, 2021 Wednesday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** coronavirus

**Length:** 2644 words

**Byline:**  Michelle Marchante

Miami Herald

**Body**

***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** rules can be confusing in South Florida. Here's the latest news on where shots are available and who is eligible:

What's new today?

A South Florida baby was born with ***COVID***-19 antibodies just weeks after her mother was vaccinated against the disease. Doctors believe she's among the first babies with some protection thanks to the ***vaccine***.

The federally run Miami Dade College north campus ***vaccine*** site and two FEMA pop-ups will no longer have Johnson & Johnson's single-dose ***vaccine*** until further notice. The sites will continue to offer the Pfizer-BioNTech ***vaccine***, which requires two doses, several weeks apart.

Miami-Dade County Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** on Wednesday received her first dose of the Pfizer ***vaccine*** at the county-run Tropical Park vaccination site. She held off on her vaccination after testing positive for ***COVID***-19 in late November.

FEMA pop-up vaccination sites in North Miami Beach and Miami Springs are moving and will reopen Thursday at Charles Hadley Park in Liberty City and at the South Miami-Dade Cultural Arts Center in Cutler Bay. The sites will run from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. every day until March 23.

Who can get ***COVID***-19 vaccines in Florida and who can't? Do you need proof of residency?

Florida is giving vaccines to healthcare workers, long-term care residents and staff and people 60 and older. Sworn law enforcement officers, firefighters and K-12 school personnel ages 50 and older are also eligible for the ***vaccine***. Anyone under 60 who a physician determines is "extremely vulnerable" to ***COVID***-19 because of a preexisting medical condition can also get the ***vaccine***.

Keep in mind that people with high-risk conditions will need their physician to sign an "at-risk" form before they can get the ***vaccine***. The form can be downloaded at [*https://floridahealthcovid19.gov/*](https://floridahealthcovid19.gov/). Some hospitals may not accept the form because they have their own system in place or have additional requirements.

It's also worth noting that pre-K-12 school personnel and childcare workers can also get the ***vaccine*** at federal-run sites and pharmacies across the state.

Only Florida residents and snowbirds can get the ***vaccine***, but there is no county residency requirement in place. That means that if you live in Miami-Dade, you can get the ***vaccine*** in Broward, or vice versa. You will need to show proof of Florida residency.

For snowbirds or part-time residents, the proof needs to be in the form of two documents such as a lease agreement and a utility bill no more than two months old, according to the Florida Division of Emergency Management.

Anyone else who lives in another state or country can no longer get the ***vaccine*** in Florida. Nonresidents who have already received the first dose in Florida will still be able to get the second dose.

The change was made to curb ***vaccine*** tourism, or people who travel from another state or country to get the ***vaccine*** in Miami or another part of the state.

Who should not get a ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine***?

People who have had a severe allergic reaction to ingredients in the ***vaccine*** or had a severe reaction after a previous dose. Ingredients of the Pfizer-BioNTech ***vaccine***, the Moderna ***vaccine*** and the Johnson & Johnson ***vaccine*** can be found on FDA.gov.

How many people have received the ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** in Florida?

According to the state's Tuesday ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** report, 110,532 people have completed the Johnson and Johnson single dose ***vaccine*** and 2,321,008 people have completed the two-dose series of either Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna vaccines.

Of those who have been fully vaccinated, 265,495 were Miami-Dade residents, 208,847 were Broward residents, 232,171 were Palm Beach residents and 9,531 were Monroe residents.

What ***COVID***-19 vaccines are available in Florida? How many doses do I need?

Florida has three vaccines available: Pfizer-BioNTech, Moderna and Johnson & Johnson.

The Pfizer ***vaccine*** requires two shots, three weeks apart, and can be given to people 16 and older. Moderna's ***vaccine*** requires two shots, one month apart, and can be given to people 18 and older. Johnson & Johnson's is a single dose and can be given to people 18 and older.

The Pfizer and Moderna vaccines are not interchangeable, however, which means that if your first shot was the Pfizer ***vaccine***, your second shot cannot be the Moderna ***vaccine***, according to the CDC.

***COVID***-19 vaccination sites in South Florida?

Pharmacies:

The following pharmacies offer ***COVID***-19 vaccines in select stores by appointment-only:

Publix stores in Florida offer vaccines, although the website frequently says appointments are "fully booked." Visit publix.com/***covid-vaccine***/florida.

Navarro Discount Pharmacies and CVS y mas stores in Miami-Dade. Some traditional CVS stores across Florida also have doses. To check for availability, visit CVS.com or call customer service at 800-746-7287.

Some Winn-Dixie and Fresco y Mas stores offer vaccines in South Florida. For Winn-Dixie, visit winndixie.com/pharmacy/***covid-vaccine***. For Fresco y Mas, visit frescoymas.com/pharmacy/***covid-vaccine***.

Some Walmart and Sam's Club stores offer vaccines, including in Broward and Miami-Dade counties. To schedule a ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** appointment at Walmart, visit walmart.com/COVIDvaccine. For Sam's Clubs, visit samsclub.com/***covid***.

Some Walgreens stores offer vaccines, including in Palm Beach County. To check for availability visit [*https://www.walgreens.com/topic/promotion/****covid-vaccine****.jsp*](https://www.walgreens.com/topic/promotion/covid-vaccine.jsp)

Federally supported site in Miami-Dade

Miami Dade College North campus is the first federally supported vaccination site to open in South Florida. Appointments are not required, but they are recommended. The site is open every day from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. and is a walk-up, which means people wait in line instead of in their car. Anyone who would prefer to book an appointment, visit myvaccine.fl.gov.

Anyone who lives in Florida and falls under the state's ***vaccine*** criteria can get the ***vaccine*** at MDC North. This includes people with at risk conditions who have an "at risk" form signed by their physician. A doctor's note is also accepted. Pre-K-12th grade school employees and childcare workers can also get the ***vaccine***.

FEMA pop-up sites are moving again. On Thursday, the pop-ups will open at Charles Hadley Park in Liberty City and at the South Miami-Dade Cultural Arts Center in Cutler Bay. The sites will run from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. every day until March 23. You can just show up because the sites don't take appointments.

Preregister for an appointment in Miami-Dade and Broward counties

People 60 and older, healthcare workers with direct patient contact, and people deemed by their physician to be "extremely vulnerable" to ***COVID***-19 can preregister for an appointment in Florida through a statewide website and phone system. K-12 school personnel, sworn law enforcement and firefighters ages 50 and older are also eligible. Long-term care residents and staff can preregister, too.

The website is myvaccine.fl.gov. You can also pre-register by phone. To find the designated number for your county, visit floridahealthcovid19.gov.

Anyone who preregisters for a ***vaccine*** appointment will be notified when slots become available at state-supported or federally supported vaccination sites in their county, according to the Florida Division of Emergency Management, which is tasked with the state's ***vaccine*** distribution. Once you get an appointment, you will need to show proof that you are a Florida resident.

State-run sites in Miami-Dade County include Hard Rock Stadium in Miami Gardens and Marlins Park in Miami.

State-run sites in Broward County include Snyder Park in Fort Lauderdale, Coral Square Mall in Coral Springs, Markham Park in Sunrise, Tree Tops Park in Davie, Trade Winds Park in Coconut Creek and Central Regional Park in Lauderhill, and Broward College's Coconut Creek campus.

Keep in mind that people under 60 with high-risk conditions will need their physician to sign an "at-risk" form before they can get the ***vaccine***. The form can be downloaded at [*https://floridahealthcovid19.gov/*](https://floridahealthcovid19.gov/).

Florida residents who do not meet the priority criteria can also sign up to receive email updates to learn when they will be eligible to receive the ***vaccine***.

Hospitals and other ***COVID***-19 vaccination sites in Miami-Dade, Broward

MIA\_VACCINES-ROLEMODELEDUCATORS-Local0139JAI.JPGMiami, Florida, March 15, 2021 - A nurse prepares a dose of the Moderna ***Covid***-19 ***vaccine*** at the Frederica Wilson/Juanita Mann Health Center. Congresswoman Wilson hosted a press conference at the Frederica Wilson/Juanita Mann Health Center , 2520 NW 75th st., Miami, during which Miami-Dade Public Schools 5000 Role Models of Excellence Project educators received vaccinations. The hope is that if members of the Black and Latino communities see people like them get the ***Covid***-19 ***vaccine***, they will in turn go out and get vaccinated.

Miami-Dade County:

The county has a website, miamidade.gov/***vaccine***, where it posts updates on where seniors and eventually the rest of the general public, will be able to find and schedule ***COVID***-19 vaccination appointments.

People 60 and older and healthcare workers with direct patient contact can book a slot through the portal. So can law enforcement, firefighters and pre-k-12 school personnel of all ages. Long-term care residents and staff can preregister, too.

Anyone under 60 considered by their physician to be "extremely vulnerable" to ***COVID***-19 will also be able to schedule a slot. Everyone who books a slot will need to show proof of Florida residency.

If you are a healthcare worker, law enforcement, firefighter or an educator, you will also need to show proof of employment with a badge, ID or paystub. People under 60 with an at risk condition will need to show a physician-signed "at risk" form that can be downloaded from the Florida Department of Health's website or from the county's online portal.

County-run sites include Zoo Miami, Tropical Park and the Homestead Sports Complex. You can also call 305-614-2014 to preregister.

Florida residents who don't qualify for the ***vaccine*** yet can also sign up through the website to be given updates on the county's vaccination process.

Here are other places that have vaccines. Some locations may be vaccinating specific groups from Florida's priority list so check the location's website for details.

South Miami Children's Clinic on Saturday will be hosting a ***COVID***-19 vaccination event from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. The clinic is at 6701 SW 58th Pl. People 60 and older and others who meet Florida's ***vaccine*** criteria can pre-register for an appointment by texting Dr. Tina Carroll-Scott at 305-962-2094 or by email at [*flascotts@bellsouth.net*](mailto:flascotts@bellsouth.net) After a screening, you will be placed on a list and someone will contact you to schedule a time.

People under 60 with at risk conditions will need to show a physician-signed at risk form to get vaccinated. Since not everyone has a doctor, there will be physicians at the site on Saturday to give health assessments. Flagging problems with blood pressure and weight could help people with at-risk conditions, such as obesity or diabetes, get the required signed form right there.

Bucky Dent Park, 2250 W. 60th St., in Hialeah. Anyone who meets Florida's ***vaccine*** criteria can get a shot here. No appointments are needed. You will wait standing in line, instead of in your car. The site is open daily from 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. or until supplies run out.

Overtown Youth Center, 1551 NW First Ave, is open from 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.. The state-run site does not require appointments. You will wait standing in line, instead of in your car. You must fall into one of Florida's priority groups to get the ***vaccine***.

Oak Grove Park, 690 NE 159th St. is open from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. The state-run site does not require appointments. You will wait standing in line, instead of in your car. You must fall into one of Florida's priority groups to get the ***vaccine***.

Homebound seniors can email their name and phone number to [*HomeboundVaccine@em.myflorida.com*](mailto:HomeboundVaccine@em.myflorida.com) and someone will get back to you about setting up an appointment.

Jackson Health System, the county's public hospital network. To check for available appointments, visit [*https://jhsmiami.org/comvac/*](https://jhsmiami.org/comvac/).

Mount Sinai Medical Center in Miami Beach is no longer booking appointments and has canceled all first-dose appointments for Jan. 23 and later because of supply constraints. Second-dose appointments are not affected. To check for updates, visit msmc.com/coronavirus-update/

Baptist Health is one of the county's largest private hospitals. To check for updates, visit Baptisthealth.net/***vaccine***.

Seniors who seek care with Leon Medical Centers can call customer service at 305-642-5366 to schedule a free ***COVID***-19 vaccination appointment. If you need transportation, let the operator know so they can also schedule a driver to pick you up. Appointments will be scheduled until Leon runs out of vaccines.

Jessie Trice Community Health System is offering vaccines to people eligible under Florida's guidelines. To check for available appointments, call 305-637-6400.

Nicklaus Children's Hospital is offering vaccines to young adults ages 16 to 21 who are being treated for certain high-risk medical conditions. To check for slots, visit Nicklauschildrens.org/Covid19Vaccine.

All veterans in Miami-Dade, Broward and Monroe counties who are patients of the Miami VA Healthcare System can get the ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine***, regardless of age and medical condition. You must be enrolled and eligible for VA healthcare benefits. Some of the sites require appointments, other locations accept walk-ins. Veterans who want to make an appointment can call 305-575-7000 or contact their care team. To learn more, visit [*https://www.miami.va.gov/services/****covid****-19-vaccines.asp*](https://www.miami.va.gov/services/covid-19-vaccines.asp)

Broward County:

Holy Cross Health in Fort Lauderdale is offering ***COVID***-19 vaccines to people under 65 who have certain medical conditions that make them at risk for severe ***COVID*** complications. Priority will be given to Holy Cross Medical Group patients, the hospital said. For details on how to request an appointment, visit [*www.holy-cross.com/covidvaccine*](http://www.holy-cross.com/covidvaccine).

Broward Health, to check for appointments, visit [*https://www.browardhealth.org/pages/being-healthy-****vaccine***](https://www.browardhealth.org/pages/being-healthy-vaccine)

Fort Lauderdale's Inter Miami CF Stadium is a ***COVID***-19 vaccination site. Appointments for this site are also booked through BrowardHealth.org

Memorial Healthcare System ran out of ***COVID***-19 vaccines. Once doses are available again, appointments can be made through the MyChart portal, [*https://mychart.mhs.net*](https://mychart.mhs.net) for current Memorial Healthcare patients. Others will have to call 954-276-4340.

The appointment-only ***vaccine*** locations listed in the website above are:

The Memorial Regional Conference Center, 3501 Johnson St. in Hollywood, noon to 7:30 p.m. Mondays, 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Tuesday through Friday.

Memorial Specialty Pharmacy, 9581 Premier Pkwy. in Miramar, 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Monday through Saturday.

Certain high-risk 16- and 17-year-old patients at Joe DiMaggio Children's Hospital may also be eligible for the ***vaccine***. Appointments can be scheduled through their MyChart account.

All Cleveland Clinic Florida locations, including its Weston campus, have run out of vaccination appointments for now. Cleveland Clinic said it will resume scheduling appointments through its website for current patients once it gets more doses. To check for slots, visit [*https://my.clevelandclinic.org/landing/****covid****-19-****vaccine****/florida*](https://my.clevelandclinic.org/landing/covid-19-vaccine/florida)

***COVID***-19 vaccines in Monroe County?

More places are offering the ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** in the Florida Keys.

Eligible Florida residents can now get vaccinated at Winn-Dixie stores in Key West and Tavernier, and at all Publix stores along the island chain. Appointments are required.

For Winn-Dixie, check [*https://www.winndixie.com/pharmacy/****covid-vaccine***](https://www.winndixie.com/pharmacy/covid-vaccine). For Publix, check [*https://www.publix.com/****covid-vaccine****/florida*](https://www.publix.com/covid-vaccine/florida).

**Load-Date:** March 18, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*You'll need a COVID vaccine if you want to cruise with Virgin Voyages*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6278-VV01-DYJM-M03P-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

March 16, 2021 Tuesday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** tourism\_cruises

**Length:** 233 words

**Byline:**  Taylor Dolven

Miami Herald

**Body**

You'll have to get a ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** if you want to take a cruise with Virgin Voyages.

The company announced Tuesday it will require all passengers and crew to be vaccinated against the virus when cruises restart, becoming the first South Florida-based cruise company to do so.

In a statement, CEO Tom McAlpin praised the Biden administration's goal of making vaccines available to all Americans by May.

"We're really encouraged by the latest rollout plans in the May time frame from the new administration, and we know the future is about vaccinations," he said. The company had previously announced it will require passengers to test negative for ***COVID***-19 before boarding.

As of now, Virgin Voyages has canceled cruises on its Scarlet Lady ship until July 4. The ship originally was set to debut in Miami in March 2020, but the company canceled its inaugural cruises due to the pandemic.

Miami-based Crystal Cruises announced last week that it will require passengers to be vaccinated when it restarts all-Bahamas cruises in July. Royal Caribbean Group will require its crew members to be vaccinated.

Virgin Voyages celebrates groundbreaking at PortMiamiConstruction of Virgin Voyages' Terminal V is underway at PortMiami. Miami Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava***, CEO of Virgin Voyages Tom McAlpin and county commissioners participated in a groundbreaking ceremony Tuesday to celebrate the construction project.

**Load-Date:** March 17, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*How one Miami-area doctor wants to change the world with COVID shots in the community*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6278-VV01-DYJM-M042-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

March 16, 2021 Tuesday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** coronavirus

**Length:** 1337 words

**Byline:**  Michelle Marchante

Miami Herald

**Body**

Dr. Tina Carroll-Scott wants to "stop the bleeding."

She wants families to feel safe again when parents go to work and kids go to school. She doesn't want them to worry about exposing Grandma to ***COVID***-19. But for that to happen, more people need to get vaccinated.

To get there, Carroll-Scott has a vision of what outreach to communities of color during a pandemic looks like.

It involves going into neighborhoods, opening access to healthcare, correcting ***vaccine*** misinformation, addressing medical mistrust among Black communities.

On Saturday, March 20, Carroll-Scott's vision became reality during a ***COVID***-19 vaccination pop-up event at South Miami Children's Clinic, 6701 SW 58th Place, where she is medical director.

"I wanted to have people see 'trusted messengers' providing support and letting people know that they support these vaccines," Carroll-Scott said. "And that we need people to take a leap of faith and trust us when we say the vaccines have been properly vetted and are not only safe, but 100% effective at preventing hospitalization and death."

While anyone who met Florida's ***vaccine*** criteria could have scheduled an appointment, Carroll-Scott's goal was to see Black and Hispanic families, the clinic's primary patients, get vaccinated. These are two communities that have been disproportionately affected by the disease, as many are essential workers who live in vulnerable multi-generational households.

Saturday's turnout, with people lining up to get their vaccines, exceeded her expectations, beyond her "wildest dreams,'' she said.

A 'labor of love'

MIA\_115VaccineSouthMiami20NPeople lined up to be vaccinated at a Miami-Dade County mobile vaccination unit administering doses of the Pfizer ***vaccine*** from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the South Miami Children's Clinic, on March 20, 2021.

A Miami-Dade County mobile vaccination unit gave 648 people their first dose of the Pfizer ***vaccine*** at the clinic. The pop-up was initially set to administer 500 doses, but high demand pushed the county to allocate additional doses to the site.

On Saturday, Miami-Dade Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** and her husband visited the site. Someone involved in the Overtown Youth Center's vaccination site later told Carroll-Scott they wanted to discuss how they could replicate her operation.

MIA\_113VaccineSouthMiami20NBroward resident Delvis Rogers is vaccinated at a Miami-Dade County mobile vaccination unit administering doses of the Pfizer ***vaccine*** from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the South Miami Children's Clinic on Saturday, March 20, 2021.

So far, much of Miami-Dade's efforts to increase the county's Black vaccination rate has come through Jackson Health System. The county's public hospital network has partnered with other organizations, including houses of worships and sororities, in outreach.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency's four mass ***vaccine*** sites -- set up in Miami, Tampa, Orlando and Jacksonville -- are run by the state and also part of an effort to increase vaccinations among minorities. The Miami-Dade site is at Miami Dade College's north campus and serves as the "hub" for two pop-up sites that move around the county.

The state says the federal sites have been a success, with more than 45,000 members of Florida's "minority population" vaccinated. However, the state won't break down the data by race, giving little insight into whether the locations are actually improving vaccination rates for nearby Black residents.

Dr. Carroll-Scott: 'Medical representation matters'

MIA\_101VaccineSouthMiami20NDr. Tina Carroll-Scott, medical director of the South Miami Children's Clinic, held a pop-up ***COVID***-19 vaccination event Saturday, March 20. Her goal was to see people who live in the community she serves rolling up their sleeves. Her clinic primarily serves Black and Hispanic families.

For Carroll-Scott, the success of her "labor of love" on Saturday represents more than two decades of her work in treating children who are uninsured or underinsured, including migrant families.

Carroll-Scott said she did "targeted outreach," not just to her patients and their families, but in neighborhoods including Richmond Heights, Coconut Grove and Perrine to get the word out.

South Miami Mayor Sally Philips posted a flier for the pop-up online and multiple local media outlets, including the Miami Herald, also publicized the event. Carroll-Scott pre-screened everyone who called, texted and emailed her about getting a dose.

MIA\_110VaccineSouthMiami20NMiami resident Pedro Bermudez gets vaccinated at South Miami Children's Clinic on Saturday, March 20, 2021.

She recruited volunteer physicians to give free health assessments at the site. In Florida, people with high-risk medical conditions under a certain age are required to show a physician-signed "at risk" form to get vaccinated.

But not everyone with a preexisting medical condition has a doctor, she said. Flagging problems with blood pressure and weight could help people with at-risk conditions, such as obesity or diabetes, get the required signed form right there.

Six of the physician volunteers she recruited were Black, she said, because representation matters in communities of color. Carroll-Scott also walked up and down the line, answering ***vaccine*** questions and thanking everyone for taking the first step to protect themselves, their families and the community from ***COVID***-19.

MIA\_111VaccineSouthMiami20NDr. Donovan Holder (far left) and Dr. Yvonne Johnson, chief medical officer at South Miami Hospital, check patients before they get vaccinated at a Miami-Dade County mobile vaccination unit administering doses of the Pfizer ***vaccine*** at South Miami Children's Clinic on Saturday, March 20, 2021.

She says 161 people used the free health assessment to get the form for vaccination. Some were also referred to community health centers for a follow-up because of their high blood pressure. Many told the doctors they had stopped taking medication because they couldn't afford it, she said.

"Although the intent was to qualify people for the ***vaccine***, it also exposed the inequities in basic health care for many people of color without access. And this then sets them up for all of the co-morbidities that make them more vulnerable to severe disease from ***COVID***-19. It's a vicious cycle," Carroll-Scott said.

MIA\_105VaccineSouthMiami20NAn FIU medical student checks on Miami Garden resident Trika Gerard after she got vaccinated at a Miami-Dade County mobile vaccination unit administering doses of the Pfizer ***vaccine*** at South Miami Children's Clinic on Saturday, March 20, 2021.

FIU medical school students joined effort

Medical students from Florida International University were also at the pop-up site to explain potential ***vaccine*** side effects, including fever and muscle pain. People were also encouraged to use the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention V-safe, which does periodic personalized check-ins to see how you're feeling after vaccination.

Carroll-Scott also hired a DJ to play old-school R&B to help calm nerves and make it feel like vaccination was a cause for "celebration." It worked -- people began dancing in line.

The doctor considers the pop-up a success overall, but she knows the work is far from over.

Until more people are vaccinated, the positive cases, the "bleeding" in underserved communities, won't stop, Carroll-Scott said. And if the virus continues to mutate and infect others, she worries that eventually even those who are vaccinated won't be safe.

She's hoping those who received their shot at the site will return home and share their positive experience with family and friends. Those who received their first Pfizer dose will need to return to the clinic after 21 days to get their second shot.

Carroll-Scott is also ready to host another pop-up clinic if someone gets her more ***vaccine*** supply.

"The faster we get people vaccinated the faster we can get back to normal," she said. But, she also has words of caution:

"This is not your license to take off your ***mask*** and go back to pre-***COVID*** days. You must remain vigilant."

**Load-Date:** March 29, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Miami-Dade mayor getting first dose of COVID-19 vaccine after contracting it months ago*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6278-VV01-DYJM-M03M-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

March 16, 2021 Tuesday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** coronavirus

**Length:** 172 words

**Byline:**  Devoun Cetoute

Miami Herald

**Body**

Miami-Dade County Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** will take the first steps of becoming fully vaccinated Wednesday when she will be administered the first dose of the ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine***.

Three months after contracting the novel coronavirus herself, she will be given the first dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech ***vaccine*** at Miami-Dade's Tropical Park vaccination site.

In late November, Cava said she had tested positive for ***COVID***-19 after possibly contracting it from her husband, who is a doctor.

At the time, Cava said, "Our family is no different from the thousands of other families at heightened risk of exposure due to the sacrifice of healthcare workers and first responders on the front lines....I'm more grateful than ever for their bravery."

Cava's announcement came only three days after newly elected Rep. Carlos Gimenez had announced he had tested positive for ***COVID***-19 along with his wife.

Early on in the pandemic, Miami Mayor Francis Suarez had contracted the virus after meeting Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro in March in Miami.

**Load-Date:** March 17, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Miami-Dade police halt mask, curfew citations after DeSantis suspends fines*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6272-WKR1-JC3J-X0H5-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

March 15, 2021 Monday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** miami\_dade

**Length:** 600 words

**Byline:**  Douglas Hanks

Miami Herald

**Body**

Miami-Dade County police have stopped issuing ***mask*** and ***curfew*** citations, calling the tickets pointless after Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis canceled fines for violating emergency ***COVID***-19 orders.

The county's court system reported a sudden drop in emergency-order citations against businesses last weekend. During the weekend of March 5, courts reported 46 citations for violating emergency orders, all but one against businesses. During the weekend that ended Sunday, courts received zero emergency-order citations.

"We're no longer issuing emergency-order citations," said Det. Alvaro Zabaleta, spokesperson for the Miami-Dade Police Department. "We're no longer doing it because the governor pardoned everything."

Last weekend was the first since DeSantis announced on March 10 that all fines for violating local ***COVID***-19 orders were canceled. He called the type of citations that can carry $500 fines in Miami-Dade an example of "unprecedented" government overreach that didn't improve compliance with public-health measures.

On Monday, Miami-Dade Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** released a statement with the county governments in Broward and Palm Beach criticizing the DeSantis move on ***COVID***-19 fines. The mayor stated that even with hospitalization rates in retreat and other ***COVID*** statistics improving, "now is not the time to throw caution to the wind as we are so close to putting this pandemic behind us."

The statement said the DeSantis order "inadvertently sends a message to residents and the business community alike that common-sense measures to fight ***COVID***-19 are no longer needed..."

Miami Beach Mayor Dan Gelber has been a top critic of DeSantis and the governor's restrictions on ***COVID***-19 enforcement. The city he leads is managing an influx of spring break visitors, and Gelber last week expressed astonishment at police having fewer enforcement tools.

"This is pretty bizarre honestly," he said. "It almost feels like he wants to be the champion for letting the virus surge through the community. I have no earthly idea why anyone would want to champion that cause."

Miami flash briefing player embed

Zabaleta noted businesses that violate the county's midnight ***curfew*** are still being told to close down. If they refuse, the proprietors could face jail time since violating emergency orders can carry either civil or criminal penalties.

While the governor canceled fines tied to civil penalties, the criminal option remains, Zabaleta said.

"If they refuse, then they are subject to arrest," he said.

Are people wearing masks in Miami and Miami Beach?Eleven Florida International University journalism students went to five locations on Sept. 4 in Miami and Miami Beach to count how many people were -- or were not -- wearing masks in public.

Miami-Dade police administrators spelled out the new approach in a Friday message to officers that county orders on ***curfew*** and other ***COVID*** measures remain in place but that citations are no longer an option.

"Despite the Governor's Order, all restrictions imposed by Miami-Dade County Emergency Orders (EOs), including the ***curfew***, remain valid and enforceable," read the advisory. "Nevertheless, due to the fact that the County cannot collect fines on its citations, officers should no longer issue civil citations for violations of the County EOs.

"Instead, officers should educate individuals and businesses as to the requirements in the EOs. If an individual or business continually fails to comply, officers are to contact a supervisor to determine whether an arrest is appropriate."

Miami Herald staff writer Martin Vassolo contributed to this report.

**Load-Date:** March 16, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Hedge fund billionaire leads the way to give internet to 100,000 Miami-area households*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:626X-WFD1-DYJM-M18S-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

March 15, 2021 Monday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** business

**Length:** 398 words

**Byline:**  Rob Wile

Miami Herald

**Body**

As many as 100,000 Miami-Dade households will soon be getting free high-speed internet thanks to a $30 million effort led by hedge fund billionaire Ken Griffin.

In a partnership led by County Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava***, Miami Mayor Francis Suarez and Miami-Dade Schools Superintendent Alberto Carvalho, organizers with the Miami Foundation and Achieve Miami announced Monday the launch of Miami Connected.

Working with wireless provider Comcast, the initiative will kick off by connecting households in Overtown, Little Haiti, Liberty City and Homestead, and continue over the next two years throughout the county on a school-by-school basis to serve all underserved communities where home internet access is limited or nonexistent.

Griffin, who was born in Boca Raton and lives in Miami Beach, has pledged $5 million along with other unspecified commitments from the city of Miami, the Children's Trust, philanthropist and Achieve Miami Founder Leslie Miller Saiontz, tech group eMerge Americas, TD Bank, and the Miami Heat.

Tools and devices

Code.org has agreed to provide free access to its digital literacy tools. The effort also includes $5 million in CARES funding that has already been used to purchase devices.

"Connectivity is a lifeline to opportunity -- it improves outcomes and gives students and their families critical resources they need to succeed," Griffin, who led a similar effort in Chicago last year, said in a statement. "It is inspiring to see the Miami community come together to address this important issue, and I look forward to continued progress in bridging the digital divide."

According to estimates, more than one in five Miami-Dade households -- 150,000 -- lack internet access, and Miami is the second least-connected large city in the United States.

"Amid ***covid***, one of biggest barriers was access to internet," said Miami Foundation President and CEO Rebecca Fishman Lipsey in an interview.

"With no Internet, you couldn't attend school, couldn't access [unemployment] benefits or ***COVID*** testing or ***vaccine*** information. Everything, like weddings and funerals and just basic communication, went online, and without it you were cut off from society. We determined, if we care about equity, we need to make sure everyone has access to the Internet."

To apply

Interested families can apply at [*https://www.miamiconnected.com/*](https://www.miamiconnected.com/). The sign-up agreement lasts two years.

**Load-Date:** March 15, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Some vaccination sites just lifted restrictions for school staff, cops and firefighters*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:626Y-HSM1-DYJM-M1XR-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

March 15, 2021 Monday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** coronavirus

**Length:** 545 words

**Byline:**  Michelle Marchante

Miami Herald

**Body**

Law enforcement and firefighters, regardless of age, can now register for a ***COVID***-19 vaccination through Miami-Dade County's online portal. So can pre-K-12 school personnel and childcare workers.

The move goes beyond Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis' executive order, which restricts vaccinations to K-12 school staff, law enforcement and firefighters ages 50 and older and excludes preschool and daycare workers.

Miami-Dade County Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** announced the changes in a memo to county commissioners and wrote it was to "ensure we are distributing our existing supply as efficiently as possible to protect frontline education workers and first responders."

On Monday, the county's ***vaccine*** website was updated to reflect the new changes.

The county is now following a federal mandate that was issued earlier this month to prioritize educators, regardless of age, Levine Cava said in the memo. She did not provide additional details on what led the county to pivot from the governor's age criteria for law enforcement and firefighters.

Previously, the county had told the Miami Herald it had to follow the governor's order and could not open vaccinations to all educators unless he made a new order. The change comes on the heels of a letter Levine Cava sent to DeSantis Thursday detailing a plan to push Florida toward President Joe Biden's goal of having all adults eligible for the ***vaccine*** by May 1.

"I believe we must now set a more aggressive schedule to expand eligibility to all Florida residents," Levine Cava wrote in her letter to DeSantis. "As supply issues continue to abate with increased ***vaccine*** production, cutting red tape surrounding ***vaccine*** eligibility is critical to protecting all our communities."

DeSantis last week said he expects to lower the vaccination age to 55 soon, and then to everyone else possibly in April.

Miami-Dade County did not immediately respond to a request for comment on the changes.

On Monday, the vaccination criteria for county-run sites Tropical Park, Zoo Miami and the Homestead Sports Complex also updated to lower the vaccination age from 65 to 60 to reflect DeSantis new executive order. The order also allows people under 60 who are deemed by a physician to be "extremely vulnerable" to ***COVID***-19 to pre-register for a slot.

Anyone who meets the criteria can pre-register for an appointment at miamidade.gov/***vaccine*** or by calling 305-614-2014.

Besides proof of Florida residency, law enforcement, firefighters and educators will need to show proof of employment with a badge, ID or pay stub. People under 60 with at-risk conditions will need to show a physician-signed form that can be downloaded from the Florida Department of Health's website or the county's online portal.

Miami-Dade County is not the first vaccination site in South Florida to tweak DeSantis' vaccination criteria. Federal vaccination sites, including Miami Dade College North and pharmacies enrolled in the federal retail pharmacy program, including CVS, Publix, Walmart and Winn-Dixie, are also vaccinating pre-K-12 educators and childcare workers, regardless of age.

MDC North and one of the FEMA pop-up sites also opened vaccinations to anyone 18 and older at least once this month. Both sites reverted to following state guidelines the next day.

**Load-Date:** March 15, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*COVID confirmed Miami's deep disparities. Post-pandemic, we should refuse to 'go back to normal' | Editorial*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:626H-S401-DYJM-M3XM-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

March 13, 2021 Saturday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** editorials

**Length:** 1092 words

**Byline:**  Miami Herald Editorial Board

Miami Herald

**Body**

When the pandemic struck last spring, Miami went into hurricane mode, with grocery-store shelves picked clean and a sense of impending doom. The supply-hoarding eased quickly but, a year later, it turns out the hurricane parallels were truer than we knew.

The ***COVID***-19 pandemic that has killed more than 32,000 people in Florida so far, sickened almost 2 million and cloistered us in our homes has also laid bare our disparities. In Miami, it has exposed fault lines and brought to light years of neglect, much like a hurricane's devastation that requires years of physical rebuilding and policy reforms.

The pandemic may not have ruined buildings but it has wrecked us in other, more lasting ways. In Miami, this year of pain and privation has widened the inequities that plague us: racial, economic, digital, educational, gender.

The list is long and familiar, but the pandemic has made it harder for our elected leaders to look away. As we hope for recovery, this terrible time may be the perfect moment to work on real change.

If there is one thing this year has shown us, it is that access to healthcare must be at the top of that list. The pandemic disproportionately harmed the health of minority and low-income communities. ***COVID***-related illnesses and vaccines illustrated how much the system is skewed toward those with financial resources, good insurance, transportation and computer skills.

And the state public-health system, which should be the first line of defense in a pandemic, wasn't up to the job after years of dismantling by Gov. Rick Scott, now a U.S. senator, and Gov. Ron DeSantis. It needs more money so it can actually serve the public in a time of crisis.

Jobs with low pay

Expanding our economy when we rebuild is critical, too. Jobs in South Florida's tourist-dependent economy were an immediate casualty last spring. Those teetering on the edge needed rental assistance, which Miami-Dade County provided with $20 million in federal relief money and another $60 million to come. A federal moratorium on evictions has also saved people's homes. But, to a build more-resilient economy as we emerge into a post-pandemic era, we need more jobs that aren't tied so tightly to low-paying service positions.

A report issued last summer by the nonprofit Miami Homes for All said a full 30 percent of Miami-Dade County's households earn less than $35,000 a year and pay more than they can afford in rent or mortgage. Executive Director Annie Lord told the Miami Herald Editorial Board, "We expected that a hurricane would put people on the street because there would be a lot of places they could not inhabit. We now fear the eviction cliff."

Employment in these past 12 months boiled down to who could stay home, who had to take the risk of in-person work -- and who got laid off. But in education, the bottom line was brutal in a different way: Students with access to computers at home -- and parents to help them -- had an advantage over those without.

Still, in Miami-Dade and Broward counties, we lost track of nearly 20,000 children in the school system. Miami-Dade now says 90 percent of the missing have been accounted for. But those who lost educational ground in 2020 may never be able to make it up, an incalculable loss for them and the community. If remote learning is to continue -- and for some, it's a good fit -- we need to learn how to do it better, for children and for teachers.

Women drop out

And women lost out during this year of purgatory. Burdened with much of the family care in this grave new world, they exited the national workforce in far greater numbers than men, an issue that is finally getting much-needed attention. And as women dropped out to care for children and the elderly, South Florida's already-glaring income disparity continued to grow, with home buyers from other states propelling single-family-home prices even farther out of reach for so many locals.

Our racial tensions were driven into the open, too, with George Floyd's death in Minnesota and Breonna Taylor's in Kentucky sparking waves of protests and counter-protests that reached South Florida. ***Mask***-wearing became politicized at the mass protests, another way the pandemic divided us.

It all paints a portrait of institutionalized unfairness, especially for people with less wealth, who tend to be people of color. But it's also an opportunity to change and to bring us together. The old version of normal wasn't all that great for many disadvantaged people anyway. When we rebuild, it should be on more even footing.

Miami-Dade Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** has started down that path with her newly created Office of Equity and Inclusion, a promising effort that could spark more diversity of thought as we seek solutions to these long-lasting problems.

Levine Cava, who has said flat-out that there is "systemic racism in county government," told the Editorial Board that the coronavirus pandemic has started a necessary conversation in which, "There is a good percentage of our community that can no longer avoid talking about the disparities."

Legislature fails us

The Legislature could help -- but probably won't. Despite creating committees in both the House and Senate that purport to address pandemic issues, lawmakers are mostly focused on promoting DeSantis' regressive agenda.

There may be help from Washington, though. Even as Florida's governor has continued to dole out shots in personal appearances around the state, federal ***vaccine*** sites supported by the Biden administration have opened more and more locations in minority communities in an effort to reach medically underserved areas.

Structural racism in the health system, normalizing issues of chronic illness in marginalized communities -- these are social ills, but they aren't insurmountable obstacles, if politicians and voters choose to address them.

"What I worry about," said Zinzi Bailey, a social epidemiologist at the University of Miami, "is we're continuing to have the same conversations but not creating structure to eliminate these outcomes."

That's the danger. As vaccines roll out and transmission rates fall, the temptation will be strong to slide back into denying the disparities. It might also be the most politically expedient thing to do. Big Tech moving to Miami creates a lot more buzz than the hard work of rebuilding the public-health system and finding ways to keep families in affordable housing. But a return to the old ways would be nothing less than dishonoring the 32,000 -- and counting -- Floridians who lost their lives in this dreadful year.

**Load-Date:** March 13, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Levine Cava has a plan to lower COVID-19 age barriers. She urges DeSantis to approve it*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6267-TXM1-DYJM-M04B-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

March 11, 2021 Thursday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** coronavirus

**Length:** 301 words

**Byline:**  Devoun Cetoute

Miami Herald

**Body**

Shortly after President Joe Biden directed states to make the ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** available for all by May, Miami-Dade County Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** drafted a plan to begin slowly moving toward the president's goal.

On Thursday, Levine Cava tweeted she had sent a letter to Gov. Ron DeSantis calling on him to create a schedule to expand eligibility to all adults. In her letter, Cava detailed an "aggressive plan" on lowering the age requirement.

cava tweet

Earlier this week, DeSantis announced he was lowering the minimum age from 65 to 60 starting Monday. Other eligible groups include nurses, and some police officers, teachers and firefighters 50 and over.

Levine Cava proposes that the state lower the minimum age by 10 years every two weeks. This means that residents 50 and over would be eligible the first week of April; 40 and over by mid-April; 30 and over the first week of May; and 20 and over by mid-May.

This closely falls in-line with Biden's directive for all adults to be eligible by May 1.

"...I believe we must now set a more aggressive schedule to expand eligibility to all Florida residents," Levine Cava wrote in her letter. "As supply issues continue to abate with increased ***vaccine*** production, cutting red tape surrounding ***vaccine*** eligibility is critical to protecting all our communities."

cava letter

She also urged the federal government to better coordinate with the state on clearing confusion surrounding the current eligibility criteria.

Levine Cava said that nearly 60% of all seniors 65 and older have already received at least one dose of the ***vaccine*** in Miami-Dade.

In the county, 239,790 people were given the first dose of Pfizer or Moderna, 221,498 completed the two-dose series and 7,794 received the Johnson & Johnson ***vaccine***, according to the Florida Department of Health.

**Load-Date:** March 12, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Another COVID vaccination site opened in Miami-Dade Tuesday, this one in Homestead*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:625T-7411-DYJM-M085-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

March 9, 2021 Tuesday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** coronavirus

**Length:** 394 words

**Byline:**  David J. Neal

Miami Herald

**Body**

A new ***COVID*** vaccination site has opened at Homestead Sports Complex, four miles away from where the FEMA-run site at the Florida City Youth Center finishes its run Wednesday.

Miami-Dade County Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava***'s Communications Director Rachel Johnson said the site hopes to vaccinate 250 people per day the first week. After that, Johnson said, it's a matter of how many ***vaccine*** shots the site receives from the state.

Unlike the FEMA site, the city of Homestead and the county are running this site at 1601 SE 28th Ave. in Homestead. So, it's appointment only, requiring people to register at the county's vaccination website or call 305-614-2014. When appointments are available, you'll be contacted.

Who can get vaccinated here?

This vaccination site is accepting appointments for:

People 65 years of age and older (this drops to 60 or older on Monday).

Long-term care facility residents and staff

Health care personnel with direct patient contact

K-12 school employees 50 years of age and older

Sworn law enforcement officers 50 years of age and older

Firefighters 50 years of age and older

People with a Florida Department of Health form filled out by a doctor declaring extreme vulnerability to ***COVID***-19

A criticism leveled at ***vaccine*** sites placed near underserved populations says there's still too much reliance on online activity for more than a surface scrape of those communities. In Homestead, for example, there's a significant migrant worker population unlikely to hop online and make reservations.

Johnson said the county, in conjunction with the municipalities and community organizations in the area, would work to improve outreach.

"We are also preparing to launch our VACS Now teams to bring information and resources directly to underserved communities including farmworkers," Johnson said via email, "and are exploring using the VACS NOW teams to direct people to the Homestead site as well as other tactics to best reach the farmworker community, including, for example, mobile units."

Homestead Sports Complex (NOT THE SPEEDWAY) 1601 SE 28th Ave., Homestead

Did Miami site move away from DeSantis' order? Some under 65 say they got a ***vaccine*** shot

Every vaccination site has a different 'leftover dose' policy. Here's what we know

'Real-life Monopoly.' Eligible residents turned away at Miami-Dade ***vaccine*** sites amid chaos

**Load-Date:** March 10, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Florida City COVID vaccine site reverts to DeSantis' order a day after giving shots to all*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6257-8GP1-DYJM-M48M-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

March 7, 2021 Sunday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** coronavirus

**Length:** 577 words

**Byline:**  David J. Neal, Colleen Wright and Jacqueline Charles

Miami Herald

**Body**

A Florida City ***COVID*** vaccination site that responded to low demand Saturday by vaccinating everybody found high demand Sunday morning as it reverted back to state limitations.

The predictable disorganization ensued at the Florida City Youth Center, 650 NW Fifth Ave.

A Florida City police officer said through a megaphone, "If you do not meet the criteria, you will not be vaccinated today" to a line of serpentine line of 200 people, few of which appeared to meet the criteria as set by Gov. Ron DeSantis in Executive Order 21-47: people over 65; long-term health care facility residents and staff; direct contact health care employees; people over 50 in law enforcement, firefighters or K-12 school workers.

The site was supposed to open at 9 a.m. By 9:18, no one had gone in as staff tried to line up people who were wait-listed during Saturday's all-vax and Sunday people who fit the limitations.

Colleen Tweet from Florida City mess

State Senator Annette Taddeo had Tweeted Saturday night that things would be just as open Sunday, a Tweet she self-fact checked and deleted at 9:38 a.m. Sunday.

Taddeo Sunday morning Tweet on Saturday night Tweet on Florida City Vax

By 11:30 a.m. Sunday, the line extended to around 270 people.People were told at one point during Sunday if extra vaccines were available at 3 p.m., they would be given to people in line rather than wasted. But, at 2 p.m., staff told people in line who didn't fit the qualifications -- which covered the vast majority of the line -- that there would be no extra vaccines and they were wasting their time.

Hospital and county contradict DeSantis' claim about role in Ocean Reef ***vaccine***

How can you get a ***COVID vaccine***? What to know about the rules at each South Florida site

Doing shots on a Saturday afternoon

The FEMA-run site at 650 NW Fifth Ave. started Saturday with the Florida limitations. But when the vaccination flow was slow, as seen by people who got vaccinated there in the late morning, staffers turned it into an all-comers vax meet -- 18 and over, bring your driver's license or state ID.

Various people who had been vaccinated or were in line rang the social media bell and residents zipped down U.S. 1 and the Florida Turnpike to a city that rarely gets visitors from north of the Redland.

Are you ready to return to work in person? Still concerned about ***COVID***? Share your story.

What had been a short line at noon curled through the parking lot and down an adjacent street by 2:30 p.m. Just after 3 p.m., a Florida City police officer put down a pylon and told people in line behind it that the 500 vaccines would run out by the time they got to the front of the line.

While some people left, others stayed, were put on a list and told to return Sunday morning.

MIA\_FLORIDA\_CITY\_DAV7People wait in line to get vaccinated at the FEMA Florida City Vaccination site located within the Florida City Youth Center in Florida, on Sunday, Mar., 7, 2021.

But, at the same time, staff told people outside the Youth Center that Sunday they would vaccinate only those the governor said should be vaccinated. By Saturday night, FEMA spokesman Marty Bahamonde said the Florida City FEMA staff were reminded who state rules said should be vaccinated and only those groups would be vaccinated.

"We expect that all will go well," Bahamonde said. "We also ask for the public's proper participation in the process."

***daniella Levine Cava*** Tweet on March 7

Florida City Youth Activity Center/FEMA ***COVID vaccine*** site

**Load-Date:** March 8, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*'Real-life Monopoly.' Eligible residents turned away at Miami-Dade vaccine sites amid chaos*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:625B-M961-JC3J-X3CM-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

March 7, 2021 Sunday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** coronavirus

**Length:** 1610 words

**Byline:**  Bianca Padró Ocasio

Miami Herald

**Body**

It took more than five hours of waiting in the sun with her 6-month-old baby and being rejected by five different staffers at Florida City's federal vaccination site for Yanira Vázquez to finally get her ***COVID***-19 shot.

Vázquez, who is a caregiver for a patient with Down Syndrome, said she was turned away because the note she had from her patient's pediatrician confirming her eligibility for a ***vaccine*** was on her phone and it was not printed. According to a Miami Herald reporter who witnessed it, Vázquez was screamed at by at least one volunteer at the site.

The only reason Vázquez was able to get her ***vaccine*** on Sunday at the site, a day after staff vaccinated hundreds of ineligible Florida residents 18 years or older -- including some Miami Herald reporters who heard about it on social media -- was that she stuck around long enough to speak to a different nurse who was compassionate and accepted her proof of employment.

There's no excuse for ***vaccine*** madness that occurred in Miami -- except that DeSantis won't give us a plan | Editorial

"I'm not trying to cut in line," said Vázquez, 41, who added the state's rules were being applied unevenly. "They just let in another woman [like me] and they said she was fine."

While hundreds of ineligible residents are now showing up to vaccination sites in hopes of scoring a leftover dose of a ***vaccine***, Vázquez is one of many Floridians who are eligible to get the ***vaccine*** but are being turned away at ***vaccine*** sites that are imposing arbitrary thresholds for eligibility -- even as facilities are not always meeting the daily allotment of available doses.

At the federally run facilities in Florida City and Miami Dade College's North Campus, those who waited in line said the measures became even stricter on Sunday, after news spread of the free-for-all approach at the Florida City site on Saturday. While it was enough to get a ***vaccine*** with proof of prescription at the MDC's North Campus on Sunday, for example, the Florida City site turned people who had a doctor's note away because they did not have the state's official form filled out.

MIA\_MDC\_Vaccinations\_MJO\_2.JPGPeople line up to receive a ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** at the Miami Dade College North vaccination site in Miami, Florida on Sunday, March 7, 2021.

"This is real-life Monopoly. It's crazy, it's like the lottery out here," said Julio Ligorria, who works in public relations and has an underlying condition that makes him eligible for the ***vaccine***.

Ligorria says he's been unable to get a doctor's note because he does not have a Primary Care Provider. Urgent care facilities won't write a note for him and most doctor's offices say they need to charge him for laboratory tests before they can give him the reference. So he decided to try his luck at the Florida City site on Sunday.

"We were going to wait it out, but I started seeing ... there was going to be no leeway," said Ligorria, who didn't get his shot. "It sounded like whoever was calling the shots there was going to make an example of that site and they were not going to budge."

Keith Labell, 39, wanted to get his 61-year-old mother vaccinated last week at MDC's North campus, a federal site. She is diabetic and brought a doctor's note with her. But she was wrongly told at the site that Gov. Ron DeSantis had rescinded his order and they were only accepting residents 65 years or older.

"It was really weird, I didn't hear anything about DeSantis rescinding his order," Labell said. He added that his mom is trying again on Monday morning.

What are the protocols to make sure doses are not spoiled?

Marty Bahamonde, a spokesman for the Federal Emergency Management Administration, said all federal sites are following Gov. DeSantis' directive and said there is no significant quantity of vaccines spoiling at federal facilities. He added that Saturday's confusion began with some individuals who said they were healthcare workers but did not have identification to prove it. Then, word spread like wildfire, he said.

"The staff trusted people, instead of saying, 'No you can't' and turning them away," said Bahamonde. "The people were not as truthful as they should be."

Bahamonde added that it is true that the site had unused doses of the ***vaccine***, but "we've gone back to the staff and said you really have to uphold the order," which he admitted could lead to a higher bar for documents that prove eligibility at federal ***vaccine*** sites.

MIA\_MDC\_Vaccinations\_MJO\_5.JPGA long line of cars forms as people arrive to the Miami Dade College North vaccination site in Miami, Florida to try and receive a ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** on Sunday, March 7, 2021.

"I think that's what happens in a situation like this where we have to be very certain so that there isn't this opportunity for others to come in without the proper documentation and getting the ***vaccine***," he said.

He added that there's a protocol for leftover doses of the ***vaccine***, although it's unclear if it's being followed on the ground. Once all eligible people have been vaccinated at a given site, staff are supposed to go down the list of pre-registered patients, including law enforcement officials or a healthcare worker.

Bahamonde says that once that happens, sites only have "one or two doses" left unused. What happened at the Florida City ***vaccine*** site should not have happened, he added.

But those protocols have not stopped counter-instructions and false information from running rampant at vaccination sites.

'Absolutely incorrect': Rumors running wild

On Sunday, a man who claimed to be a state employee told people waiting at the Florida City site that there weren't going to be any more extra vaccines being offered because unused doses were going to be returned to Tallahassee.

Kevin Guthrie, deputy director at the Florida Department of Emergency Management, said that statement was false and the state government was not recalling vaccines.

Where can Florida teachers get a ***COVID vaccine***? The rules for eligibility vary by site

"That is just ... this is absolutely incorrect," said Guthrie, who added the Florida City site is federal and not a state site. "There are individuals we have to remove from the site because they're not getting information correct."

Guthrie explained that at the end of each shift, employees at state sites only open one vial at a time to make sure vaccines are not wasted. "We will always open a new vial if we have people in line who are eligible," he said.

And at the end of each day, all unused vaccines are returned to a secure location nearby where they are stored accordingly.

Are you ready to return to work in person? Still concerned about ***COVID***? Share your story.

"We're not going to crack open 100 vials ... that would be wasteful of everybody's taxpayer dollars," he said.

On Saturday, as chaos ensued at Florida City's ***vaccine*** site, 494 people were vaccinated at the site, just slightly under the 500 daily allocation at the site, according to Mike Jachles, public information officer for FEMA. On Sunday, when hundreds were being turned away, FEMA reported only 321 doses had been given at the same site, well below the daily capacity.

MIA\_MDC\_Vaccinations\_MJO\_3.JPGPeople line up to receive a ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** at the Miami Dade College North vaccination site in Miami, Florida on Sunday, March 7, 2021.

Meanwhile, some officials argue that the chaos that was created by Florida City is a sign that DeSantis is not acting fast enough to make younger age groups eligible or having a proper system to vaccinate ineligible people if there are leftover vaccines.

"It's very chaotic because there's no plan," said Florida Sen. Annette Taddeo, a Democrat. "You do hear of places who don't use their allotment, and you're like, why is this happening? Why don't we have two lines?"

Miami-Dade County Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** said in a tweet that she was urging DeSantis to expand vaccination requirements.

Levine Cava Tweet 3-7

"Our top priority must be to get shots in arms as fast as possible and ensure no available ***vaccine*** supply goes unused," she said. "I urge the Governor to expand eligibility requirements to meet the great demand in our community and across the state."

Alfred Spellman, producer of 'Cocaine Cowboys', reported on Twitter that he walked up to another one of the Miami-Dade sites in Overtown Sunday morning and was waved in without any wait and left with a shot of Moderna in his arm.

Spellman Tweet embed 3-7

The vaccination site at 1551 NW First Ave. is open from 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. daily for those eligible for ***COVID*** vaccines under state regulations, including Florida residents 65 and older and healthcare workers. Seniors must bring ID to verify their age, and healthcare workers must bring their professional license.

As of last Wednesday, school employees, police officers and fire rescue workers who are 50 and older were also able to receive vaccines at the site.

(Although the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has recommended that reporters be included in Phase 1C of ***vaccine*** distribution, the state of Florida has not included them.)

The last ***vaccine***

On Sunday, the last ***vaccine*** went to a woman named Anita, thanks to a good Samaritan in the line who lives in Homestead and was told he could not get the shot even though he said he has diabetes.

Mohammad Alam, 55, seeing Anita sitting on a chair, pleaded with a worker at the site to have a heart and let Anita receive a shot. Eventually, the worker relented. He intervened, he said, because he didn't feel it was right.

As for his own rejection, Alam said "I feel so bad; it's not the right thing to do."

Miami Herald staff writer Jacqueline Charles and photojournalist Daniel Varela contributed to this report.

**Load-Date:** March 8, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Florida adds red tape for medically vulnerable while COVID vaccines go unused in Miami*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:624V-0JD1-DYJM-M1TT-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

March 5, 2021 Friday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** coronavirus

**Length:** 1593 words

**Byline:**  Ben Conarck and Douglas Hanks

Miami Herald

**Body**

With 57% of Miami-Dade County's 65-and-older population having received at least one dose of a ***COVID vaccine***, a newly opened federal vaccination site sat with ample unused supply on Thursday, even as access expanded, albeit slowly, and with shifting but stringent rules.

Public health experts say it's a sign that the state, and particularly Gov. Ron DeSantis, isn't moving fast enough to make more people eligible for the ***vaccine***. They also say the governor's latest executive order requiring medically vulnerable people under the age of 65 to get a physician's slip prescribing the ***COVID vaccine*** adds needless red tape that will keep uninsured and low-income people from their place in line.

The first week of March was marked by slowly expanding eligibility and an emerging trend of ***vaccine*** appointments going unused, at least in pockets of the state with less demand for the 65-and-older age bracket.

Meanwhile, demand is much higher in people under 65, including those with underlying medical conditions, but many have complained about onerous paperwork needed to get cleared for a shot.

In Miami-Dade, the county vaccination dashboard showed more than 20,550 first doses on hand on Wednesday, a surge of supply from three days in a row of ***vaccine*** deliveries.

Dr. Michael Lauzardo, an infectious disease expert at the University of Florida who has helped to organize vaccination sites, said in discussions with colleagues around the state, he's heard about "a lot of openings because of challenges around restrictions and because of the gate-keeping process."

Lauzardo said the age-restricted approach was the right move when DeSantis first made it, but now, with more than half of the state's seniors vaccinated, there are too many restrictions in place. He believes the ***vaccine*** should be open to everyone, or at the very least, everyone over a certain age group, such as 40 and older, or 50 and older.

"The goal should be: Don't leave an empty slot," Lauzardo said. "Our enemy is not someone coming on the wrong day. Our enemy is an empty ***vaccine*** appointment. That's the enemy."

An uphill battle for the uninsured

Abel Iraola, a 29-year-old communications strategist from Hialeah, was lucky enough to score an appointment at a Publix on Wednesday morning, hours after the governor's new guidelines for the medically vulnerable came out.

But within a few hours, he got a call from Publix telling him he would need to fill out a state-mandated form, which requires a physician to certify him as medically vulnerable.

Iraola, who doesn't have health insurance, has been scrambling to get a doctor's note ever since. On Friday, the day of his scheduled appointment, Iraola still hadn't had any luck. A clinic he had been using occasionally said he would need to come in and get lab work done before they would sign off.

"On the one hand, I get it -- it's been since late 2016 since my records have been updated," Iraola said. "But at the same time, it's like ... come on."

Dr. Rebecca Weintraub, an assistant professor in the Department of Global Health and Social Medicine at Harvard Medical School, said people like Iraola should be taken at their word. With her colleagues, Weintraub has argued for an "honor code" to make sure that people without healthcare access don't get bumped out of their rightful place in line for a ***vaccine***.

"Many Americans do not have a primary care provider, and many Americans have delayed their preventative screenings during this time," Weintraub said. "Some of our most vulnerable populations, their co-morbidities have gotten more complex because of the nature of the pandemic and their limited access to food, exercise and just the stress of the pandemic itself."

A ***vaccine*** honor system

Though it may seem counterintuitive, Weintraub said the simple question of "Are you a resident of Florida?" for example, is enough to deter most people who would access the ***vaccine*** inappropriately.

For that reason, Weintraub said people should be allowed to "self attest" to their age and medical conditions. She called the doctor's note requirement an "unfortunate fence that's gotten built, and that will not actually lead to use having an equitable or effective deployment of the ***vaccine***."

In addition to discouraging people with less access to healthcare, the policy also discourages low-income people.

"This is a free ***vaccine***," she said. "We've already paid $18 billion to produce the discovery side of mRNA vaccines, for example. And when people have to bring documentation, they're getting concerned they may also be charged."

Florida House Rep. Carlos G. Smith, an Orlando Democrat, has spent an inordinate amount of time lately helping people with underlying conditions figure out whether they can get the vaccines.

"It's just frustrating because Governor DeSantis says that he's a small government guy who wants to get rid of bureaucracy and red tape," Smith said. "And yet, in order for the most medically vulnerable Floridians to get access to the ***COVID vaccine***, he's requiring them to jump through all of this bureaucracy and red tape."

DeSantis' office did not return requests for comment on the doctor's note policy.

Miami-Dade looking at changes

Miami-Dade Commissioner Jean Monestime's district north of Miami includes neighborhoods with some of Miami-Dade's highest poverty rates. At a county ***COVID***-19 briefing on Friday, he pressed Jackson Health administrators on how medically vulnerable residents could get vaccines without the uphill challenge of securing a doctor's written approval.

"It may require them two to three weeks to get that note. For others who may have lost their insurance, they don't have doctors. Could some of these people bring their prescriptions to show they have those conditions?" he said.

"I'm hearing a lot from my district that some of these people want to get vaccinated but they cannot get the doctor's appointment in time to do so."

Dr. Peter Paige, a Jackson administrator who serves as Miami-Dade's chief medical officer, said prescriptions aren't always evidence that a person fits the state's definition of medically vulnerable.

"Your point is very well taken," he said.

"As we've rolled out the process for high-risk conditions, we've tried to be liberal about it," he said. Jackson does not require the state form, but will accept doctor notes as well, Paige said during the video briefing, which was open to the public.

"We'll continue to discuss opportunities" for vaccinating more high-risk people, he said.

Carlos Migoya, CEO of the county-owned hospital system, said there are doctors available at Jackson clinics for free appointments if people can't afford care. "You can get them within a two- to three-day notice," he said.

Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** will ask the DeSantis administration to move away from requiring the single-page state form as a requirement for getting vaccinations under medical exemptions at state-supported sites. Those include Marlins Park and Hard Rock Stadium, as well as the federal center at Miami Dade College North, where Florida provides the screeners.

She also said she would make county-run sites at Tropical Park and Zoo Miami as "flexible as we can be" under state rules for medical exemptions.

"It was designed to make it simpler, But it does not make it simpler," she said of the state form, which requires a physician's signature. "I agree that other ways we can document the health situation should be available."

Commissioner Raquel Regalado said she thought Florida's one-sheet form, which only requires a doctor's sign-off, made sense as a quick way for a screener to move someone through the vaccination process as a medically vulnerable person. "It doesn't require you to say why the person has an extreme vulnerability. ... I think the form is a lot easier," she said.

Time to open up eligibility?

The lack of access to the ***vaccine*** is made worse by the Republican-controlled Florida Legislature's refusal to expand Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act. That decision left an estimated 850,000 Floridians without health insurance in the "coverage gap."

"Everyone needs to get access to the ***vaccine*** eventually," said Smith, the Orlando Democratic House representative. "There are millions of medically vulnerable people who are trying their best to comply with the governor's demands for documentation but they can't because of the healthcare system we have in this state, or lack thereof."

carlostweet

In the meantime, figuring out who is eligible for the ***vaccine*** and who isn't is taking away time that could be used to make more appointments and get more people vaccinated, said Lauzardo, the infectious disease expert at UF.

Beyond the medically vulnerable, the confusion has also played out among those who work for K-12 schools and pre-K and child-care centers.

The Biden administration directive said all people who work at pre-kindergarten to K-12 schools, plus daycare, should be vaccinated nationwide. But DeSantis has limited the vaccines only to K-12 school personnel 50 and older, meaning those who don't fit this requirement can't get vaccinated at large-scale ***vaccine*** sites like Hard Rock Stadium, Marlins Park, Tropical Park and Zoo Miami.

Lauzardo said with cases and hospitalizations still trending down, now is the time to vaccinate everyone, not continue to target the most at-risk for death and disease while slots go unused.

"We've got our foot on the throat of the virus right now," Lauzardo said. "Now is the time to press hard into the source, not just the vulnerable, and the only way to do that is by getting everybody."

**Load-Date:** March 5, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*It's been 100 days. Here's what new Miami-Dade Mayor Daniella Levine Cava's been doing*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6238-WKD1-DYJM-M0PD-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

February 26, 2021 Friday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** miami\_dade

**Length:** 2120 words

**Byline:**  Douglas Hanks

Miami Herald

**Body**

Months after winning the election for Miami-Dade mayor, ***Daniella Levine Cava*** once again has canvassers going door to door on her behalf.

Throughout February, progressive advocacy groups Engage Miami and We Count! joined other nonprofits in dispatching staff across Miami-Dade to help people complete the online "Thrive305" survey Levine Cava's office created on county issues.

Results from more than 25,000 entries will help set the agenda for town halls this spring. Those will lead to the drafting of a community "Action Plan." That's scheduled to come out before Levine Cava -- who founded a Miami nonprofit in the 1990s dedicated to community activism -- submits her first budget to a newly constituted county commission with its own agenda.

"I spent a lifetime preparing people to be active citizens," a masked Levine Cava, 65, told the Miami Herald from a round visitors table in her 29th floor office overlooking Biscayne Bay in County Hall. "And I came into government to make sure they were heard."

Friday marked the end of the first full 100 days in office for Miami-Dade's first female mayor, who is trying to push a progressive agenda and navigate a new and uncertain power structure in county politics -- all while managing a pandemic.

New commissioners occupy six of the 13 board seats, the results of term-limit rules in place since 2012 but only now forcing retirements. The next wave comes in 2022, resulting in a commission emboldened by newcomers eager to make their mark and veterans facing their final months in power.

MIA\_Levine\_Cava\_100\_Days\_MJ (3)Miami-Dade County Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** works from her office inside the Stephen P. Clark Government Center in downtown Miami on Wednesday, Feb. 24, 2021.

Already something of an outsider with her former colleagues -- Levine Cava never chaired a committee during her six years on the board -- the new mix has meant some early friction on the dais for the new mayor.

On Feb. 1, commissioners ignored Levine Cava's request to defer a last-minute vote advancing a bridge project she had opposed in a South Miami-Dade area she represented during her time on the county commission prior to becoming mayor on Nov. 17.

She had a deal with Jeffrey Loria, then didn't

Two weeks later, a nearly unanimous commission granted Chairman Jose "Pepe" Diaz's request to replace Levine Cava as the top negotiator to settle a county lawsuit with former Miami Marlins owner Jeffrey Loria. Diaz secured $1 million more than Levine Cava did. Commissioners accepted the $5.5 million deal, which resolved a 2018 profit-sharing lawsuit filed after Loria claimed his $1.2 billion sale of the franchise would yield no money to Miami-Dade.

Levine Cava, who after the election invited individual commissioners to her Palmetto Bay home for lasagna, Thai food and fish, said she didn't consider the move a snub from Diaz. He had voted for the original 2009 Marlins stadium agreement that sparked the the 2018 suit.

Cava\_Swearing\_In\_MJO\_8.JPGNewly elected Miami-Dade Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** speaks during her swearing-in ceremony inside the Knight Concert Hall at the Adrienne Arsht Center for the Performing Arts in downtown Miami on Tuesday, Nov. 17, 2020.

"The chairman had a long relationship with this guy -- after all, he was there when the deal was negotiated," she said. "If I had realized the chairman had that relationship, I may have asked him to make the call."

Levine Cava won office after galvanizing fellow Democrats in a county Joe Biden won by 7 percentage points. She beat Republican Esteban "Steve" Bovo by 8 points, injecting party preference into a race that remained officially nonpartisan. She's mostly avoided partisan pot-stirring since taking office, and declined to take sharp jabs at Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis while pressing his administration for more doses at county vaccination sites.

She has also kept in place the ***COVID***-19 policies and relief budgets she inherited from Carlos Gimenez, a Republican now representing Florida's 26th Congressional District. Even so, she's won public support from city mayors of both parties who spent much of 2020 criticizing Gimenez over what they called slights of municipal governments in ***COVID*** talks and decisions.

'It's been a pleasant change'

On her first day as mayor-elect on Nov. 4, she was with Republican Miami Mayor Francis Suarez. While Suarez led Miami's opposition to the ***curfew*** Gimenez imposed in July to discourage late-night socializing, his city changed policy in December to begin enforcing the midnight ***shutdown*** for businesses.

"It's been a pleasant change, no doubt about it," said Juan Carlos Bermudez, the Republican mayor of Doral. "It's very different when you have someone reaching out and saying, 'OK, what can we do together?' "

MIA\_Levine\_Cava\_100\_Days\_MJ (4)Legislative Affairs Director Nicole Tallman, left, reviews documents with Miami-Dade County Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** at her office inside the Stephen P. Clark Government Center in downtown Miami on Wednesday, Feb. 24, 2021.

She's also reworked the mayor's 29th floor suite of offices since Gimenez left, adding black-and-white wallpaper for an accent wall in a waiting area, and a reading nook with throw pillows where a cupboard once stood. Gallery-sized prints of the Everglades, including an approaching squall, decorate the walls.

Visitors recently found her on the floor ahead of an afternoon appointment, trying to fix a recycling bin that had toppled under her desk. When senior policy advisor George Andrews arrived for a meeting with a ***mask*** inching down off his nose, Levine Cava hopped up from the table. "Would you like another ***mask***?" she said, opening up a desk drawer with a stash of spares. "Here's one: Miami City Ballet."

A founder of the nonprofit Catalyst Miami, a group that encourages residents to get active in local government, Levine Cava has continued to tap into Miami-Dade's network of nonprofits. She turned to the county's philanthropic network to fund the Thrive305 survey, which is housed at a website purchased by the Miami Foundation, thrive305.org.

Introductions to survey questions contain admiring descriptions of Levine Cava as being committed to "a stronger, healthier and more inclusive county" and someone who will "build trust" with people.

Cava\_Elections\_MJO\_4.JPGDaniella Levine Cava celebrates during her watch party in the Wynwood neighborhood of Miami after winning the Miami-Dade mayoral race against Esteban Bovo on Tuesday, Nov. 3, 2020.

Options on the public safety section of the survey struck Commissioner Joe Martinez as one-sided for focusing on alternatives to more police staffing, such as deploying social workers along with law enforcement. "What about asking, 'Would you like to see more police officers patrolling your neighborhood,' " said Martinez, a former police officer. "Very one-sided survey."

Loren Parra, the Miami Foundation's director of public affairs, said the mayor's office crafted the language in a partnership with the foundation. "This is to create a thoughtful and more inclusive community," she said.

A new office on racial gaps

While running for mayor, Levine Cava often hit on themes of inclusion. She said Miami-Dade needed to address "systemic racism" in county government, and in early February she created a four-person Office of Equity and Inclusion to focus on racial gaps and other disparities throughout Miami-Dade.

It's an encouraging but familiar message for Daniella Pierre, a local civil rights leader who praised Levine Cava for bringing attention to the equity issue but said the mayor should be judged on results.

"Already, we are filling out another survey, to answer questions we have responded to year after year," she said. "It's time for deliverables now."

Carnival\_Terminal\_F\_MJO\_9.JPGPresident of Carnival Cruise Line Christine Duffy, left, and Miami-Dade County Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** attend a groundbreaking ceremony for Carnival Cruise Line's Terminal F at PortMiami in Miami on Friday, Jan. 29, 2021.

Levine Cava did deliver for union leaders when she terminated the Miami International Airport contract for Eulen America, an airline vendor under fire for allegedly poor working conditions and the target of union organizing efforts.

Her early actions on climate and the environment mostly involved holdover issues from the Gimenez administration -- including releasing reports on septic tanks and the health of Biscayne Bay that she had requested as a commissioner.

Her first major environmental initiative, a non-binding agreement by cruise companies to bring pollution-cutting electric hookups to the county port, only came after the Miami Herald detailed the environmental problems that stem from the missing infrastructure.

Levine Cava is preparing to interview candidates to run the county's Water and Sewer Department after asking for the resignation of Gimenez's director, Kevin Lynskey. He was one of three department heads who left their jobs once Levine Cava took over, including Transportation Director Alice Bravo and former Deputy Mayor Jack Osterholt, who also served as director of Regulatory and Economic Resources.

Laura Reynolds, an environmental consultant who worked for Levine Cava's political committee during the campaign, said the mayor should get credit for a $10 million matching grant for Biscayne Bay projects that DeSantis announced in a joint appearance with Levine Cava in December in Key Biscayne.

"I think I've already been on at least five or 10 meetings where the environment, at the county level, has taken the priority," Reynolds said. "While it isn't apparent to the general public yet, that's the case because of ***COVID***, and that's consuming a lot of time."

Cava\_Swearing\_In\_MJO\_7.JPGNewly elected Miami-Dade Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava***, center, is congratulated by her family after being sworn into office by Judge Roy K. Altman inside the Knight Concert Hall at the Adrienne Arsht Center for the Performing Arts in downtown Miami on Tuesday, Nov. 17, 2020.

Levine Cava was in office 16 days before she and her husband, a physician, both were diagnosed with ***COVID*** after a weekend canoeing trip through the Everglades. They traced their cases to a patient in Dr. Robert Cava's practice. Though she continued working through home video conferences, Levine Cava now describes dread at what the virus would do.

"I was scared," she said. "You didn't know how it would turn. ... It was worrisome."

Levine Cava campaign manager still on the job

The mayor's first day in office coincided with new terms for five commissioners, the most since the 1990s as voter-approved term limits forced the retirements of long-serving politicians. While board members were confined to small ceremonies inside the commission chambers, Levine Cava invited hundreds to an event at the county's Adrienne Arsht performance hall.

Our Democracy, Levine Cava's political committee, paid $12,000 for the event, with campaign manager Christian Ulvert helping stage manage. "Need Padron ASAP," Ulvert wrote in a text message when the program began to drag. Shortly after, former Miami Dade College President Eduardo Padrón began his remarks on stage.

Ulvert's firm, Edge Communications, received $15,000 from the committee in January. He said that was to cover prior expenses, but that he remains on contract with the committee as Levine Cava wraps up her first 100 days. "Anything political, I handle," he said. "She's invited for fund-raisers, and asked for endorsements. ... And we're going to still fund raise."

Cava\_Swearing\_In\_MJO\_12.JPGNewly elected Miami-Dade Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** waves after speaking at her swearing-in ceremony inside the Knight Concert Hall at the Adrienne Arsht Center for the Performing Arts in downtown Miami on Tuesday, Nov. 17, 2020.

Levine Cava calls ***COVID*** the obvious top crisis she faces as mayor, but described a spike in gun violence a close second. Miami-Dade's homicides are up 46 percent in 2021 so far, part of a nationwide trend in rising violent crime. They were up 30% in 2020. After two teenagers were shot in South Miami-Dade on Tuesday, Levine Cava said she got county police director Freddy Ramirez on the phone until nearly midnight to talk about changes.

"It's just too much. It's just too much. ... We're all just in despair," she said. A lawyer who once headed up the child-welfare legal division in Miami-Dade, Levine Cava said the administration is planning to dispatch more police and social services into areas seeing increased violent crime, which she ties to disrupted daily life from ***COVID***.

"Look, we've got children out of school. We've got people without jobs. We've got people who are stir-crazy," she said. "We need to be in the community. We need to be on the street."

**Load-Date:** March 1, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*As Miami-Dade vaccinates younger residents for COVID, Black seniors feeling left behind*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6232-X9W1-JC3J-X2M9-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

February 25, 2021 Thursday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** coronavirus

**Length:** 1732 words

**Byline:**  Bianca Padró Ocasio

Miami Herald

**Body**

During the pandemic, Romania Dukes has done it all for her West Perrine community: hand out food boxes, help combat gun violence, distribute masks.

But helping the Black senior citizens in this South Miami-Dade neighborhood get vaccinated has proven to be her toughest challenge yet.

Most residents have no transportation, while most ***vaccine*** sites only allow residents with cars. Residents say the county government has little presence in the neighborhood and eligible residents too often rely on word-of-mouth information they get from neighbors and grandchildren.

And while the county ***vaccine*** site at Zoo Miami is nearby, the registration process is open to everyone, and affluent, digital-savvy residents often grab the first slots. There's only one small clinic operating as a vaccination site in West Perrine, offering a limited number of appointments to seniors, many of whom are still not convinced by the science.

While Miami-Dade County is reaching nearly 45% of residents 65 and older who have received their first dose as of Tuesday, according to the ***COVID***-19 Dashboard created by epidemiologist Jason Salemi, and Jackson Health System is expanding access to at-risk residents over 55, Dukes and other residents in South Miami-Dade are sounding the alarm over what they say is a continued lack of ***vaccine*** access in their neighborhoods.

Only 8 percent of Black residents have been vaccinated in county

Even though the county and Jackson Health System have tried to correct the disparities by partnering with Black churches and community groups, vaccination rates in majority-Black communities, like West Perrine, which is 54% Black, still lag those of white and more affluent neighborhoods. Miami-Dade County is 17% Black, but only 7.6% of residents who've been vaccinated, including those who've received the first dose or both doses, are Black, according to the state's data as of Feb. 24.

Statewide, only 5.6 percent of those who've been vaccinated are Black, even though Blacks account for 17 percent of the state's population, state records show.

"They knock on doors when it's time to vote for them, but not knock on doors to [educate] so many African-American people," Dukes said. "You got people coming from each state ... to get the ***vaccine*** first, when you just started out in these African-American communities. And they're in the back of the line -- or not in line."

County leaders have turned to Dukes because she is a well-known advocate against gun violence in her community. She says she's been invited to virtual calls with county officials and health executives alike, to help her connect "her seniors," as she calls them, to government resources.

"Someday, they will call you. 'We have 10 slots left. Do you know anybody 65 and older to get it?' And I'm like, 'Yes, I know a lot of people,' " Dukes said. "Why can't I pick 100? Why can't you just set up [in the neighborhood] and so those people could come get the shot?"

Lacking basic information on how to get the ***vaccine***

The issue is not just about ***vaccine*** hesitancy among minorities because of historical mistrust in the health system, as many experts have explained. Dukes says many of West Perrine's seniors don't have basic information, like where to get the ***vaccine***, who is eligible to get it, how effective it is or that minor side effects are common but are rarely serious or permanent. In fact, many of the people she often speaks to have never gotten tested, even as the virus has ravaged Black communities at a disproportionate rate.

"If [officials] take a walk and the time and come with people who are from the community to sit down and have a five-minute talk, I guarantee you are [going to have given] a test to over a hundred people within an hour or so. And then come back and make them comfortable enough to get the shot," she said.

Churches have been a crucial part of the county's strategy to vaccinate more Black residents. But some argue the scope is too limited, as it has mostly benefited congregations. The most sensible solution, several say, is expanding the county's mobile ***vaccine*** site program, which allows for residents to walk up without an appointment.

IMG-0878.jpgWilbur Bell, 81, standing at the Miami-Dade Democrats office in Perrine near Bell's Plaza on Jan. 29, 2021. Bell is a longtime leader in his community and businessman who is helping spread the word to local seniors about the importance of getting the ***vaccine*** against ***COVID***-19. He got vaccinated at Second Baptist Church in Richmond Heights.

"The churches, they got a lot of stuff. But people don't go to church. .. In the neighborhood, you have 200, 400 people from the church from the whole area," said Wilbur Bell, 81, a West Perrine community leader and businessman. "They have not brought one mobile unit to the right community. You bring a mobile unit, like we do food giveaway ... and let me know 24 hours, 48 hours ahead, people will line up to it."

County setting up mobile ***vaccine*** sites in each district

Government officials are starting to listen. On Saturday, District 1 Commissioner Oliver G. Gilbert III hosted the first no-appointment mobile vaccination site in Miami Gardens. Hundreds of cars lined up in Carol City Park, while dozens of residents lined up in a separate walk-up line at the same place.

Teresa Mesino, 68, drove to the site and got there three hours before it was set to open, at 5 a.m., with two of her relatives, 82-year-old Gladis Mesino and 64-year-old Jose Cantillo, hoping all three of them could get a ***vaccine***.

MIA\_mobilevaccination\_SN002Gladis Mesino, 82, and Teresa Mesino, 68, wait in line inside a vehicle at the first walk-up mobile testing site open to Florida residents that won't require appointments at Miami Carol City Park in Miami Gardens, Florida, on Saturday, Feb. 20, 2021.

"It hasn't been easy. We've been trying to get appointments since they began giving out shots, every day," said Teresa Mesino. "So we've been up since dawn today."

The Miami Gardens event was the first of Miami-Dade's new strategy to bring a mobile vaccination operation to each of the 13 county commission districts, Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** said Friday during an online video briefing with the commission.

She also said plans are underway to deploy county "surge" teams that knocked on doors over the summer to promote ***COVID***-19 testing and hand out masks. This time, the campaign would focus on the value of vaccines and could direct eligible residents to a mobile vaccination site able to register people on the spot.

As more seniors who are "ready and eager" for the vaccines get inoculated, Levine Cava said, "we are going to have to do more outreach" for others.

MIA\_mobilevaccination\_SN022Healthcare workers prepare paperwork prior vaccination at the first walk-up mobile testing site open to Florida resident that won't require appointments at Miami Carol City Park in Miami Gardens in Miami Gardens, Florida on Saturday, February 20, 2021.

The federal government is also pledging to vaccinate 1,000 people a day in South Florida through a new vaccination center being set up at Miami Dade College North in March. On Tuesday, 2,985 people in Miami-Dade received their first ***vaccine*** shot, according to the Florida Department of Health's Wednesday report, and 1,586 others got their second dose.

Miami-Dade County spokeswoman Rachel Johnson said the county would like to expand its mobile vaccination units to make it easier for seniors to get vaccinated. She said the units could also help the county bring vaccines to underserved areas that have low vaccination percentages.

Miami-Dade Fire Rescue vaccinating homebound seniors

Miami-Dade Fire Rescue employees have also helped vaccinate homebound seniors and have helped coordinate transportation for seniors who are not homebound but need help getting to their vaccination appointment.

The county has also created mobile vaccination units, which it has used to establish public housing vaccination pods. And the county has begun talking with ride-share companies about potential partnerships to help seniors get a ride to their vaccination appointment.

In West Perrine, the Community Health of South Florida's West Perrine Health Center (CHI) is the only clinic in the neighborhood giving vaccines. The nonprofit has held webinars to educate Black residents about the benefits of getting vaccinated against ***COVID***-19, and it has one mobile van that goes to public housing complexes to vaccinate eligible seniors.

"We've been focusing on those housing complexes where we know that nobody is coming out," said Saint Anthony Amofah, chief medical officer at CHI. "We've come up with a list of people who want to get the shot. We try to get more people, and then we go out."

Amofah agreed with Dukes that even when there are options for seniors to sign up for the ***vaccine***, education continues to be a barrier. While health workers at CHI have spoken directly with residents to give them information about receiving the ***vaccine***, Amofah said it was crucial for health employees to speak directly to patients.

"Nobody's doing that and some patients will never come out," Amofah said.

MIA\_mobilevaccination\_SN080Vaccination seekers wait in line outside at the first walk-up mobile testing site open to Florida resident that won't require appointments at Miami Carol City Park in Miami Gardens in Miami Gardens, Florida on Saturday, February 20, 2021.

Without more outreach from officials, Black seniors won't be the only ones being left behind. As the state looks to broaden out its reach to younger demographics, some residents argue homebound seniors who are not at assisted living facilities have few options to be protected.

Struggling to get her 79-year-old mother vaccinated

Alicia Mendoza, 48, has been trying to get an appointment for her 79-year-old mom for weeks, without success. Mendoza lives in Maryland, and her mother lives alone in an apartment complex in the City of Miami, with no close family who live nearby.

She cannot stand for long periods of times because she has chronic conditions, like arthritis, and had a mini stroke in the past two years.

"I've been looking from Hialeah down to Homestead and I can't find anything," said Mendoza. "It's frustrating when you see Jackson, 'Oh we're giving the ***vaccine*** to people over 55...' And I'm like, 'How?' "

Miami Herald staff writers Douglas Hanks and Michelle Marchante contributed to this story.

**Load-Date:** February 25, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Miami-Dade sorely needs mayor's push to bring equity, inclusion to Black residents | Opinion*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:621C-4XX1-JC3J-X2YY-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

February 17, 2021 Wednesday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** fabiola\_santiago

**Length:** 933 words

**Byline:**  Fabiola Santiago

Miami Herald

**Body**

In a county enamored with rags-to-riches stories, not everyone acknowledges the economic aid -- and the Democratic "welcome to the USA" policies -- that led to prosperity and success for many early immigrants to Miami-Dade.

The triumphant narrative that prevails is that hard work alone made the man or the woman.

But it's time to acknowledge that, besides federal aid and privileged immigration status, the whiteness of the early Cuban exodus in a deep-South state also played a role in opening the road to achievement.

If you don't think so, ask a Black Cuban millionaire or billionaire businessman in town. Can't find one? Neither could I.

You won't find many African-American millionaires, either.

While Miami's Blacks were among the region's first settlers, they were largely left behind as modern Miami rose. Now, new leadership in county government is promising a concerted effort to bring equity and inclusion to the forefront -- and end the historic "separate and unequal" treatment of Blacks.

'A history of broken promises': Miami remains separate and unequal for Black residents

County mayor & racial disparity

It's time to acknowledge that, in 2021, we have to do more than just talk about race and racism. We need long-overdue policies with teeth at every level to ensure that, whether it's a business opportunity, decent affordable housing or a shot of ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** in the arm, they're available to everyone.

To that end, the new County Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** has taken a first step in the right direction by creating the Department of Equity and Inclusion, funded with $375,000 and led by an energetic African-American professional from South Dade, director Jason T. Smith.

As he put it, Smith knows what a $1 million county investment in working-class Goulds yields, as opposed to say, well-to-do Pinecrest, in terms of equity.

Knowing the history of broken promises, I'm skeptical, but also hopeful after talking with Smith and Rahel Weldeyesus, senior adviser to the mayor in charge of another new department, Innovation & Performance, which will work hand in hand with Smith.

In my 40 years of reporting, I've heard a lot of promises made to the African-American community. Few have been kept.

But I don't recall a mayor making it a priority, and three months into her term, addressing issues of inequity and discrimination by taking vast, multilayered action to lift barriers to opportunity.

Miami-Dade mayor's new office pushing racial equity, including in her administration

County contracts & procurement

On the table for review: contentious county contracts and procurement procedures that so often only favor the politically connected. Smith's office will study where they stand in terms of the inclusion of Black, Hispanic, and LGBTQ communities. And women and people with disabilities, too.

"We will be data driven," Smith says. "A dashboard of metrics will establish where we are now and set some real goals as to where we want to go."

A community survey is being circulated to some 950,000 residents asking for input on what people need from county government and "civic weekends," now in virtual form because of ***COVID*** but coming up in outdoor "tent" gatherings are being planned to target hard-to-reach populations.

"True change happens from the bottom up, among the people," Smith says. "It's important to hear from the community so that the county can take the lead from the community."

What a change from the top-down leadership of former Mayor Carlos Gimenez, whose family, friends and campaign workers seemed to be first in line for county contracts.

Minority-owned mom-and-pop businesses and entrepreneurs will get information on how to become a county vendor, how to connect with capital funding, and on how to follow the path of success of others.

Smith, 42, points to the story of a Black developer who got his start installing drywall at a church but was able to grow his business after he was tapped to work in a county-funded senior housing project in Richmond Heights that, unbelievably so, had no minority participation.

'We're treated as an anomaly.' Black developers discuss barriers in Miami real estate

Promoting stories of success will also be Smith's job.

The mayor's effort isn't just politically correct diversity talk, but action directed at eliminating systemic racist barriers to success.

Policy to ensure there's diversity in county-funded projects "needs to be baked into the system," Smith says. "And that's something my office can champion and say, 'There is a path here and it can be done'."

All of the members of the County Commission should get behind Levine Cava's plan. County investment in Black prosperity benefits all of Miami-Dade.

Commissioners should not shy away from the racial-disparity conversation, but welcome it. For far too long, they've been part of a system that should have -- but didn't -- grant county contracts to a bigger share of minority contractors.

"We have systemic racism in county government," Levine Cava said on the campaign trail -- and it wasn't lip service.

Kudos to Madame Mayor for making good on a campaign promise that has the power to bring real change and prosperity to people left behind.

MIA\_0019MINORITYCONTRACTINGMiami-Dade County Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** announces the launch of Miami-Dade's first Office of Equity and Inclusion during a press conference at the Hampton House in Miami on Wednesday, February 10, 2021. The Office will work across County departments and collaborate with community stakeholders to normalize and implement the concepts of equity and inclusion in government and beyond.

**Load-Date:** February 18, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Miami's Jackson on cusp of expanding COVID vaccine to include some of those 55 and up*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:621H-4XH1-JC3J-X47D-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

February 17, 2021 Wednesday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** coronavirus

**Length:** 870 words

**Byline:**  Ben Conarck

Miami Herald

**Body**

After more than a month of frenzied online lotteries and ad hoc partnerships with faith leaders, Miami's public hospital has finally seen a slackening of demand among people 65 and older for the two federally authorized ***COVID*** vaccines.

That's led to internal conversations at Jackson Health System about whether it's time to shift the focus to those 55 and older who have underlying medical conditions that put them at risk for severe ***COVID***-19 -- a bucket of people already eligible under Gov. Ron DeSantis' late December executive order on vaccines, but who have struggled to find appointment slots.

Jackson Health has already been vaccinating that age bracket of existing patients, but hasn't yet opened the appointments up to the public -- no South Florida hospital has.

"We're trying to orchestrate what that looks like," Jackson CEO Carlos Migoya told the Miami Herald on Wednesday. "I don't think we have an answer [from state officials] on how to do that just yet. We might by the end of the week."

Issue of verifying medical conditions for those over 55

Aside from ***vaccine*** appointments for seniors disappearing in mere minutes -- a measure that has now expanded into hours -- the major obstacle that has prevented hospitals from delving into that age group has been the daunting task of verifying claimed medical conditions.

As of yet, neither DeSantis nor the Florida Department of Health have told hospitals how they would do that, Migoya said. Last week, the hospital CEO noted that, especially in Miami, it would be feasible for someone to obtain a doctor's note that was either fudged or altogether fraudulent.

A spokesperson for DeSantis did not directly answer questions about whether DeSantis thinks local officials should refocus efforts on people over 55 with medical conditions.

The lack of clarity on how to grapple with those decisions has led hospital systems like Jackson and Baptist Health South Florida to administer vaccines to people under 65 only if they are their own patients -- receiving treatment for cancer or organ transplants, as two examples.

But worrying about whether or not people are truthful about their medical conditions might be a distraction. Eric Toner, a senior scholar at the Johns Hopkins Center for Health Security, said there's no proven method to verify a stated medical issue, and it would be prudent for hospitals to follow an honor system, knowing that some people could be less than honorable.

"You're not going to check their blood sugar; you're not going to ask for their medical records," Toner said. "You may or may not even want to bother with a doctor's note."

'Competing priorities' led to slower roll out for Miami seniors

Though demand for ***COVID*** vaccines among those 65 and older may be lessening, Miami-Dade County has still trailed behind others in vaccinating a large chunk of its senior citizens, prompting county Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** to write a letter to DeSantis asking for more ***vaccine*** doses.

On Friday, state officials said that Miami-Dade's lagging behind was due to "competing priorities" among healthcare workers, seniors and people with underlying conditions. The county also has a much larger healthcare infrastructure than other parts of the state, including its two major hospital systems, Jackson and Baptist, officials said.

As of Tuesday, about 12,600 Baptist employees and medical staff members received at least one dose of the ***COVID*** vaccines, a hospital spokesperson said. At Jackson, about 6,442 employees received the ***vaccine*** out of the 12,000 or so deemed to be eligible, a spokesperson said on Friday.

Jared Moskowitz, director of the Florida Division of Emergency management, said on Friday that "Miami-Dade has gotten the same equitable amount of distribution as any other county," explaining that vaccines were allocated to each county based on its 65-and-over population, not overall population.

"I think having the largest county, largest medical system, a lot of people with co-morbidities: There were a lot of competing priorities in Dade County," Moskowitz said. "So they've had to vaccinate lots of different groups, but that does not mean they received less ***vaccine***."

Good time to pivot

Migoya, the Jackson CEO, said that the county has made some progress in the last week or so since Levine Cava sent the letter to DeSantis. Demand hasn't dried up among seniors, he said, but it certainly has lessened, to an extent.

"Maybe we are reaching that point where we are -- I wouldn't say exhausted, but exhausting -- the number of people over 65 who are willing to get the ***vaccine***," Migoya said.

Toner, the infectious disease expert at Johns Hopkins, said now would be an appropriate time to focus on other groups in the current tier of ***vaccine*** candidates.

But he said officials shouldn't get too caught up in worrying about how that will work, and should instead focus on speed, especially considering the mutated versions of the virus. Florida leads the nation in confirmed cases of B.1.1.7, known as the "U.K. variant."

"We just need to get as many vaccines in arms as we can and we shouldn't let the perfect be the enemy of the good," he said. "If some people skirt the rules, jump the queue, I'm not going to worry too much about that."

**Load-Date:** February 18, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Never mind: Hundreds offered vaccine slots in Miami-Dade, then told it was a mistake*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:620F-YF31-JC3J-X4HM-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

February 12, 2021 Friday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** miami\_dade

**Length:** 640 words

**Byline:**  Douglas Hanks

Miami Herald

**Body**

Miami-Dade County this week mistakenly offered more than 400 ***vaccine*** appointments to ineligible people, forcing the county to retract the offers for the coveted doses.

The vaccination website run by Utah-based Nomi Health, the private company hired by Miami-Dade to manage appointments, mistakenly sent out 430 invitations on Thursday for people under 65 to schedule ***vaccine*** appointments.

While the Nomi site allows people of any age from Miami-Dade to register, only healthcare workers and people 65 and over are supposed to be selected for appointments.

It was the latest flub or shortcoming from the website, which launched earlier this month to some technical glitches and without Spanish or Creole options. The site can be accessed through miamidade.gov/***vaccine***.

A county administrator overseeing the site said the mistaken ***vaccine*** appointments went out while the Spanish and Creole options were being added Thursday.

Nomi website sends out wrong ***vaccine*** appointments

"The mistake was caught quickly," said Greg Rubin, the assistant county fire chief overseeing the operation by Nomi, the healthcare startup that runs the county's appointments website and staffs ***vaccine*** sites. "However, there were 66 people that had booked already for that. We sent a corrections email, with an apology. We're directly reaching out to those folks, to cancel their appointment."

While Florida limits ***vaccine*** doses for the general public to people 65 and over, Miami-Dade's registration website for the ***vaccine*** waiting list has no age restrictions. County representatives said they wanted people of all ages to sign up to gauge demand, and to create a mailing list of people interested in vaccines once they become eligible.

Martin Keane received one of the mistaken appointment announcements. The Miami lawyer in his 40s registered when the site launched, as did his wife. The email both had been waiting for arrived Thursday shortly after 7:20 p.m.

"Thank you for setting up an appointment to receive the ***COVID***-19 ***Vaccine***," the Nomi email said. "We have confirmed your request and look forward to seeing you at the time and date below."

The Keanes followed the instructions and secured two slots at Miami Dade College's North campus, a place that's only open for vaccines to people with appointments.

"We had to put in our birthdays," he said. "If there was an age restriction, you'd think it wouldn't let you book an appointment. But there was no issue."

No age restriction for Miami-Dade vaccination website

For Keane, the appointment allowed him to start thinking about life after ***COVID***-19 fears. He quickly shared the good news with his parents, both in their 80s and living in Chicago.

"I haven't been able to visit them in over a year," he said. "I was beyond excited to tell them last night and we were making plans to see them."

Three hours later, new emails arrived with the subject lines: "CORRECTION: Appointment email sent in error." Keane's reaction: "Disappointed would be an understatement..."

Nomi was founded just two years ago, and has surged to national prominence by securing emergency ***COVID*** contracts across the country. That's brought scrutiny, too. Tennessee pulled out of its contract with Nomi in June after deciding it didn't want the company's coronavirus tests.

In an email to senior aides Thursday evening, Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** called the error "unacceptable."

"At a time when so many people are so desperate for the ***vaccine***, it's unacceptable to give the false impression that vaccines are available to those who are currently ineligible," the mayor wrote to J.D. Patterson, the county's chief public safety officer, and Dr. Peter Paige, the Jackson Health administrator who serves as Levine Cava's chief medical officer. "Please work with the vendor to ensure systems are put in place to prevent this from happening again."

**Load-Date:** February 13, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Miami-Dade County Commissioner Raquel Regalado tests positive for COVID*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6204-05G1-DYJM-M4NK-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

February 11, 2021 Thursday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** miami\_dade

**Length:** 257 words

**Byline:**  David J. Neal and Douglas Hanks

Miami Herald

**Body**

Miami-Dade Commissioner Raquel Regalado has tested positive for ***COVID***-19, the county announced Thursday morning.

The county said Regalado is "asymptomatic and in good health" and was tested Wednesday because one of her kids might have been exposed.

The announcement also claimed Regalado wore a cloth ***mask*** over an N95 ***mask*** while in the Miami-Dade County Commission offices and chamber for committee meetings Tuesday and practiced social distancing. But a photo contradicts that last part..

At Tuesday evening's Transportation Committee meeting, a masked Regalado joined other masked commissioners for a shoulder-to-shoulder group photo with outgoing transit director Alice Bravo.

A commission source said Thursday commissioners have not received guidance on whether to isolate. "Business as usual here," the source said.

Miami-DAde Transportation committee meeting Jan. 9Commissioner Raquel Regalado, second from right, joins fellow commissioners and county administrators for a group photo on the evening of Tuesday, Jan. 9, 2021. Regalado tested positive for ***COVID*** Wednesday.

Meanwhile, the county said Regalado and her staff will go into isolation for 10 days until cleared by testing.

Regalado is the latest among local politicians to test positive, a list that includes Miami-Dade Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava***, Miami Mayor Francis Suarez, former Miami-Dade Mayor now U.S. Congressman Carlos Gimenez; state Rep. Marie Woodson and Coral Gables Mayor Raul Valdes-Fauli.

Miami-Dade's vaccination website has a big shortcoming. County planning a fix soon

**Load-Date:** February 11, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Miami-Dade's vaccination website has a big shortcoming. County planning a fix soon*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6201-BNG1-DYJM-M3BX-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

February 10, 2021 Wednesday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** miami\_dade

**Length:** 721 words

**Byline:**  Douglas Hanks

Miami Herald

**Body**

A week after Miami-Dade County launched online registration for a ***vaccine*** waiting list, instructions on the portal still only cater to English speakers.

The county site run by the private firm Nomi Health launched on Feb. 4 as a clearinghouse for anyone seeking a ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** from Miami-Dade. Previously, Miami-Dade would take reservations as ***COVID***-19 vaccines became available, granting appointments on a first-come, first-served basis.

Now, anyone seeking a ***vaccine*** can register on the new site and be contacted when ***vaccine*** slots are available. But while county-run websites on ***COVID***-19 and community vaccination information can toggle to Spanish and Creole translations, the Nomi site where people actually register for the waiting list only provides instructions in English.

Census figures estimate about 75% of Miami-Dade residents speak a language other than English when at home.

Regalado: Add Spanish, Creole to Miami-Dade vaccination site

In a Feb. 9 memo to Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava***, Commissioner Raquel Regalado urged the county to expand the registration website to Spanish and Creole. To rely on pre-registration, Regalado wrote, "it is necessary that the program be accessible to our most vulnerable residents, who likely are not fluent in English."

Rachel Johnson, the county's communications director, said the Miami-Dade call center for the waiting list (call 305-614-2014) already has a Spanish option. "We are working now to expand the pre-registration [online] system to other languages," she said.

A Nomi representative, Daisy Cabrera, said Spanish and Creole options should be available by the end of the week.

The new waiting-list site produced some glitches at the start, but Cabrera and Johnson said those should mostly be fixed. One common complaint was the rejection of some Miami-Dade addresses that didn't use Miami as a city. Johnson said early filters for residency were adjusted to end the faulty rejections.

Nomi running ***vaccine*** registrations in Miami-Dade

Nomi is a Utah company that's been providing ***COVID*** testing services for Miami-Dade throughout 2020 and into 2021. The contract extended to ***vaccine*** distribution, with Nomi staffing the county vaccination site at Tropical Park, which is limited to people 65 and over with appointments.

Those appointments now come through the Nomi registration site. The Levine Cava administration recently won approval for a $5 million payment to Nomi as part of a batch of emergency vendor approvals related to ***COVID***.

The company also has provided ***COVID***-19 testing to foreign consulates across Miami. Nomi has a string of ***COVID*** contracts across the country, and has drawn scrutiny in Tennessee and elsewhere over its work. Nomi says it has provided ***COVID*** supplies, testing and services quickly and competently under emergency conditions.

Cabrera, the Nomi representative, said one complaint in Miami likely involves user error. Once someone has registered for the site, they should receive an email with a link to confirm the address.

That link can only be used once. If clicked a second time, it registers an error message. She said Nomi was updating the error language to be less confusing.

The site has been busy. In a letter Tuesday to Gov. Ron DeSantis asking for more Miami-Dade ***vaccine*** supplies, Levine Cava said more than 60,000 people had registered.

Who is eligible for the ***vaccine*** waiting list?

While aimed at seniors currently eligible for Florida vaccines -- people 65 and over -- the site is actually open to people of all ages who want to be vaccinated.

The Levine Cava administration said people not eligible for vaccines are basically being added to a mailing list, and will receive updates in the future. Johnson said people under the age of 65 who register in advance won't have early access to ***vaccine*** appointments once eligibility rules expand.

"The universe will be opened to the public as well, to register at the same time," she said. "We'll sort or reset the entire pool."

Levine Cava said the broader registration will help Miami-Dade gauge how much demand exists for the ***vaccine*** in younger age groups, and that the county plans to use contact information to promote vaccinations directly as supply increases.

"We know who is interested in the ***vaccine***, so when the opportunity becomes available, we know who to contact," she said.

**Load-Date:** February 10, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Miami-Dade passing on another chance to cut pollution from cruise ships at PortMiami*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:61YT-CH11-JC3J-X2PY-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

February 9, 2021 Tuesday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** tourism\_cruises

**Length:** 1020 words

**Byline:**  Douglas Hanks and Taylor Dolven

Miami Herald

**Body**

Miami-Dade leaders on Tuesday advanced another PortMiami terminal project -- but without modern pollution controls already adopted by cruise ships docking there. Under the plan, the county will spend $177,200,000 to build the new MSC Cruises terminal but won't let vessels connect to shore power.

Commissioners broke into applause after the unanimous vote in the PortMiami and Environmental Resilience Committee, which approved the construction deal. The arrangement involves a mix of county and MSC dollars for a 62-year lease on a $577,200,000 terminal that can accommodate up to three cruise ships at the same time.

While MSC has joined much of the cruise industry by equipping its ships with shore power capability, vessels would continue belching toxic gas from their smokestacks since the county declined to require hook ups in any of its new terminals.

The vote came days after a Miami Herald story on the lack of shore power at PortMiami. The county has opted to forego electric hook-ups at four other new port terminals that will cost about $700 million in public funds.

Like other cruise lines building new PortMiami terminals, MSC has already upgraded its ships to use shore power in other ports. It signed a deal with the county that doesn't include shore power equipment because the county didn't require it.

In an interview after the vote, the chairman of MSC Cruises USA declined to say whether the shore power issue was discussed in negotiations over the terminal deal. But it should be a future priority for the port, he said.

"Right now the industry has a challenge because not all ports have shore power," said Richard Sasso, the MSC Cruises USA chairman. "The industry is very progressive and very proactive."

On the company's deal to build a terminal without shore power at PortMiami, Sasso said: "This was a port project that had nothing to do with the environmental issue at that point in time. It needs to be now."

The priority for MSC's current project was jobs and economic growth, he said. Construction on the new terminal is expected to create 1,500 jobs. "The process here had to do with getting the capacity to build more piers for ships. It's about growth of the community...All that other stuff will come...It's definitely on the agenda."

Miami-Dade has never required cruise terminals to provide power hook-ups -- not even during an historic construction spree over the last several years. The county's new mayor, ***Daniella Levine Cava***, won office in November in part on a pro-environment platform. Her administration forwarded the MSC terminal deal to the commission, and the mayor's representatives did not raise the issue ahead of Tuesday's vote.

The chairwoman of the committee, Commissioner Rebeca Sosa, said she is requesting county lawyers draft legislation to pursue the installation of shore power at PortMiami terminals in response to the Herald article. She said the bill would focus on modifying county-owned terminals once the cruise industry recovers from a near year-long ***shutdown*** during the ***COVID***-19 pandemic.

"We can retrofit when the economy comes back," Sosa said.

The MSC terminal deal is expected to go before the full commission for a final vote on February 17.

MIA\_Shoer\_Power\_MJO\_4Smoke puffs out of Royal Caribbean's Harmony of the Seas' smokestacks as the cruise ship is docked at PortMiami on Jan. 20, 2021.

Shore power allows ships to turn off their engines while they are in port and plug into the local electric grid instead of idling and spewing fumes during stays that typically last 10 hours. It has been installed at seven other U.S. cruise ports since 2001 and was part of a master plan for PortMiami drafted by the county in 2011.

EPA data shows shore power could reduce carbon emissions at PortMiami by about 35%. Emissions dangerous to human health -- sulfur oxide and nitrogen oxide -- could be cut by 67% and 99%, respectively.

Cruise companies, including MSC Cruises, have spent millions outfitting their ships with plugs to be able to use shore power. At least 15 shore power-equipped ships, including MSC Meraviglia and MSC Seaside, have visited PortMiami hundreds of times in the last decade, emitting avoidable greenhouse gases and exhaust dangerous to human health because the port doesn't provide shore power.

Installing a single port-side shore power hookup costs about $20 million. The price can go higher if substations are needed.

Levine Cava told an audience of Miami Beach residents on Monday night that she was eager to get shore power at Port Miami. Her comments came during a panel discussion with Miami Beach Commissioner Micky Steinberg, Miami-Dade County Chief Bay Officer Irela Bague and Miami Beach Environment and Sustainability Director Betsy Wheaton.

South Beach resident Matthew Gultanoff, 35, attended the panel with the mayor Monday. He said he was unaware that the MSC deal had been added to to the county committee meeting agenda at the last minute.

"The Levine Cava administration is well aware of residents' concerns of what additional port expansion will bring to local air quality and resilience in the county," he said. "There was once again opportunity to show that the cruise capital of the world is taking environmental challenges seriously, and once again they failed to do so."

Construction on the MSC terminal project, the largest of the five new cruise terminals, was originally slated to begin in October. Miami-Dade County and MSC scrapped their previous agreement after the ***COVID***-19 pandemic hit and re-drafted the deal approved by the county committee Tuesday. In addition to the $177,200,000 county-incurred construction costs, the county will pay MSC $183.8 million over the first 30 years of the deal in dockage fees from the third cruise berth to be used by another cruise line. Disney is considering securing its spot at that berth, according to documents filed with the commission.

The original agreement included a spot for MSC's U.S. headquarters in the terminal. The new deal does not mention the headquarter component.

Over the course of MSC's 62-year lease, the company will pay the county $2.03 billion in rent.

**Load-Date:** February 9, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Churches, sororities, group texts: How Jackson mended its Black vaccination rate*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:61Y0-TFJ1-JC3J-X437-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

February 6, 2021 Saturday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** coronavirus

**Length:** 1401 words

**Byline:**  Douglas Hanks, Ben Conarck and Samantha J. Gross

Miami Herald

**Body**

Miami-Dade County's public hospital system has managed to improve its vaccination numbers among Black residents, in part thanks to Sandy Sears and her group chats.

She is part of an effort by Jackson Health System to use community groups to fill vaccination slots from Black neighborhoods, and Sears regularly sends out alerts to fellow members of her sorority and a volunteer club that appointments are available for anyone 65 and over.

"Last night, I sent a reminder out I was getting more appointments next week," said Sears, a retired Jackson executive active in local chapters of the Delta Sigma Theta sorority and the Links service organization. "I already have names, and dates of birth and telephone numbers from that. I'm working on my 47th" appointment.

Black residents account for about 17% of the population but are only receiving 8% of the shots, based on state statistics of people who identified a race when vaccinated.

The statistics out of Jackson still show a vaccination process where Black recipients lag, but the share is dramatically larger than it is countywide.

Carlos Migoya, the county-owned hospital's chief executive officer, told Miami-Dade commissioners Friday that about 13% of Jackson's vaccinations have gone to Black people, up from about 8% when the first public ***vaccine*** injections began in early January.

"We're making progress," Migoya said.

Black churches helping ***COVID*** vaccination rates

He said the hospital system has made ***vaccine*** appointments available to about 70 houses of worship, with the bulk of them going to churches with predominantly Black congregations. Recently, the effort expanded to community groups with ties to neighborhoods where seniors are lagging in the vaccination statistics.

That includes the Little Havana Activities and Nutrition Centers, and the SantLa Haitian Neighborhood Center.

Hispanic vaccination numbers are harder to compare to racial categories because that's a category that can overlap with race designations. Hispanic residents make up about 72% of the county's 2.8 million population.

Vaccination statistics published by Florida show Hispanic people made up 57% of those who were vaccinated countywide and identified themselves as Hispanic or non-Hispanic. Jackson's internal vaccination numbers show 47% of the 62,000 people vaccinated identified as Hispanic.

Vaccination data by ZIP code released Jan. 21 by Miami-Dade show a wide gap in the county's predominantly Black neighborhoods. Of the 10 ZIP codes with the highest portions of Black residents, only three didn't also fall into the 10 lowest for vaccination rates.

The worst: 33054 in Opa-locka, where 67% of the population is Black and only 1.4% of the residents had been vaccinated, according to county data and Census statistics.

Jackson has been key to Miami-Dade's limited progress in vaccinating the Black population. The hospital estimates it provided about one-third of all ***vaccine*** doses for the more than 180,000 people in Miami-Dade who have received one shot, but as many as 60% of the more than 13,000 Black residents vaccinated.

Mayor Levine Cava: Jackson proof outreach works

"The Jackson effort has proven what can happen when you do reach out," Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** said this week.

Even as Jackson posts encouraging Black vaccination rates, a senior administrator said this week the hospital's ***vaccine*** supply from the state may be dropping.

Jackson Vice President Matthew Pinzur told a forum at the State of Black Miami event Wednesday that the hospital system expected its state supply of vaccinations to dwindle by the end of February.

"We think that we're probably only to be getting ***vaccine*** from the governor for another couple of weeks, most likely," Pinzur said. "We think it's going to transition ... to these state sites and some of the private pharmacies."

On Friday, Pinzur said those remarks weren't based on definite information from Florida and that Jackson doesn't know when ***vaccine*** shipments might change. But in a Thursday press conference in Aventura, Gov. Ron DeSantis said Florida has already begun shifting doses away from hospitals statewide.

"If you look in the last couple weeks how the doses have gone, it's not as hospital heavy," DeSantis said. "We are trying to spread it out ... because not every place in Florida has massive healthcare infrastructure like Miami-Dade or Broward County does."

The DeSantis administration has its own program steering vaccines to more than two dozen churches and houses of worship in Miami-Dade and beyond.

Companies developing vaccines face decades of mistrust from within the Black communityAs minority communities are recruited for coronavirus ***vaccine*** trials, companies are battling decades of mistrust in ***vaccine*** safety. Local leaders are encouraging greater engagement efforts to help fight the pandemic in the future.

Migrant farmworkers and ***COVID*** vaccines

That includes a mobile vaccination effort Sunday at a South Miami-Dade church that's closed to the public but will provide ***vaccine*** doses to about 500 seniors. They were mostly recruited from migrant farmworker communities -- a group with a high Haitian population, said Kionne McGhee, the Miami-Dade commissioner who helped organize the event.

Working with Florida's Emergency Management division, McGhee said the mobile vaccination clinic was set up to target a population "often ignored and forgotten."

Public-health experts and community leaders point to a pair of challenges for the Black vaccination rate.

One is broad distrust in a healthcare system with a history of racism, including the infamous Tuskegee study that for decades allowed low-income Black patients to suffer untreated syphilis even though treatments were available. It ended in the 1970s.

The other challenge is access, from limitations on transportation to drive-through vaccination sites to needing assistance in navigating social media and online registration sites.

"You can't expect the elderly, people without cars, especially in the inner city, to book themselves," said Audrey Edmonson, the former Miami-Dade commission chairwoman who is part of the vaccination effort with local Black sororities. "You have to bring the vaccinations to the people."

Monica Schoch-Spana, a senior scholar at the Johns Hopkins Center for Health Security, said Miami-Dade's vaccination challenges will only get steeper in the coming months as targets move beyond the older population, where demand for doses is relatively high. She praised efforts to recruit churches and nonprofits to get people vaccinated and urged Miami-Dade to get more creative on where to look next for help.

"There are other places to go," she said. "In some communities, there may be certain stores that are social magnets, hair salons or barbershops, places where people gather. It's tapping into those networks."

For Jackson, Black service organizations have let the hospital system reach seniors who didn't sign on during the outreach efforts with churches.

The hospital system provides group leaders with spreadsheets containing open appointment slots at three Jackson locations. From there, the groups are free to book any eligible person they can. Current rules restrict vaccinations to people 65 and over and to healthcare workers.

Instead of waiting on hold on a state appointment phone line or racing to complete an online reservation when scarce spots open up at Jackson or a county location, people recruited in outreach efforts have time to arrange transportation for available slots. They can also pick a location closer to home.

Volunteers filling the appointment slots say the easier access also is bringing in people who otherwise weren't eager for the shots.

"I think it puts people at ease," said Georgia McLean, president of the Miami-Biscayne Bay chapter of the Links. "A lot of individuals, they were just fearful of the unknown."

Participants also often have a familiar person encouraging them to follow through.

"You still have some who are a little afraid," said Stephanie Steele-Nelson, president of the Miami alumnae chapter of Delta Sigma Theta. "You have some who don't know how to get an appointment.

"I took an 86-year-old lady to get a ***vaccine*** yesterday. She was fearful," Steele-Nelson said. On the way over, Steele-Nelson handed over her phone to the woman. On the line was a fellow sorority member who works as a nurse. "Just to let her know it's going to be OK."

**Load-Date:** February 8, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Miami-Dade launches COVID-19 vaccination waiting list -- with some glitches*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:61XV-5561-DYJM-M29C-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

February 4, 2021 Thursday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** coronavirus

**Length:** 419 words

**Byline:**  Douglas Hanks

Miami Herald

**Body**

Miami-Dade County launched a waiting list for senior ***COVID***-19 vaccinations Thursday, though the rollout included some website glitches.

Multiple users reported error messages after the county announced the new web portal shortly after 4:30 p.m. Others reported success, receiving confirmation messages from Miami-Dade.

While vaccination doses are mostly restricted to people 65 and over, Miami-Dade is allowing people of all ages to register on the site. A county spokesperson said once someone is in the system, they'll receive updates as Florida expands eligibility for ***vaccine*** injections. People 65 and over will be contacted for appointments as supplies become available, said Rachel Johnson, the county's communications director.

Florida residents who want a ***COVID vaccine*** can now pre-register online and by phone

"We're encouraging people to sign up who are currently eligible," she said. "But we aren't excluding people from signing up who are not. They won't be able to get appointments, but they will get email updates."

The new website, accessed through miamidade.gov/***vaccine***, and phone line, 305-614-2014, mean a major change in how Miami-Dade will distribute the limited number of ***vaccine*** doses it receives from Florida. Rather than announcing brief reservation windows for appointments that fill up fast, Miami-Dade will fill vaccination slots from the new waiting list.

It may not be first-come, first-served, either. With a lower vaccination rate for Black residents and ZIP codes with low incomes trailing Miami-Dade's wealthier neighborhoods, Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** said this week the county may use the list to boost vaccinations in areas falling behind.

cohen error

"If we want to target because we see a particular area isn't receiving its fair share, we can target by ZIP code," Levine Cava told commissioners Tuesday in a briefing previewing the launch.

While the new site and phone line are taking names, demand for ***vaccine*** continues to outpace supply. Johnson said Miami-Dade has ***vaccine*** doses for appointments this week and expects another delivery for slots next week.

Among the glitches reported by users: Follow-up emails directing recipients to dead web pages and a registration system that was refusing non-Miami addresses for some. Those errors were reported when people tried to register from Coral Gables, Cutler Bay and Pinecrest. At least one registration was accepted when the user switched the city from "Cutler Bay" to "Miami."

"We're looking into that issue," Johnson said.

**Load-Date:** February 5, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Here's how you can increase your chances of booking a COVID-19 vaccine appointment*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:61XD-W3B1-JC3J-X4VK-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

February 3, 2021 Wednesday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** coronavirus

**Length:** 1155 words

**Byline:**  Michelle Marchante

Miami Herald

**Body**

Many people want a ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine***. It's probably one of the most talked about pandemic topics since pandemic bread-making.

Vaccination appointments are hard to come by, and the journey to book a slot can be filled with anxiety, hope, frustration, confusion. There are some tips and tricks to try. And while we can't guarantee you'll get an appointment, the advice below will likely help increase your chances:

Tips to get a ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** in Florida

1. Florida recently started a statewide online and phone system to help book appointments for seniors 65 and older, front-line healthcare workers, long-term care facilities and anyone with a health condition that makes them "at risk" of falling seriously ill with the disease.

Anyone who pre-registers is put on a wait list and will be notified when slots become available at state-run vaccination sites including Hard Rock Stadium in Miami Gardens, Marlins Park in Miami and Vista View Park in Davie.

Those who don't qualify for the ***vaccine*** yet can subscribe to be notified by email, phone or text when they're eligible. The system is optional, which means not every county will be using it. Miami-Dade and Broward are on the list and Monroe is expected to be added soon. The new website is myvaccine.fl.gov. You can also pre-register by phone.

For Miami-Dade, the number is 888-499-0840 or TTY 888-256-8918. For Broward County, call 866-201-6313 or TTY 844-252-2003. For the Florida Keys, call 866-201-7069 or TTY 833-990-2908. For Palm Beach County, call 866-201-6754 or TTY 833-476-1532.

Miami-Dade County has also launched a similar website and phone system that will allow healthcare workers with direct patient contact and Florida residents 65 and over to be placed on a wait list. And yes, this means qualifying healthcare workers and seniors in Broward and the Florida Keys are eligible.

Anyone who pre-registers through Miami-Dade's new system will be notified when slots become available at county-run sites including Tropical Park and Zoo Miami. Those who don't qualify for the ***vaccine*** can still sign up to receive updates about the vaccination rollout. To get on Miami-Dade's wait list, visit miamidade.gov/***vaccine*** or call 305-614-2014.

2. Besides the new centralized systems, there are different appointment hotlines and websites for hospitals and pharmacies like Publix. Save the phone numbers of your preferred locations into your phone's address book and bookmark the websites.

It will make it easier for you to call and check the website every day. Make a point to check it at different hours because you never know when a slot will open.

3. When booking an appointment online, fill out only what's required. Speed is key here.

4. If you're helping a family member or a friend get a slot, make sure you have all the information you need, including date of birth, the correct spelling of the patient's name, address, phone number and email. This will help speed up the process.

MIA\_0014churchvaccination012221Shirley Kemp of New Beginning Missionary Baptist Church receives her vaccination shot on Friday, Jan. 22, 2021. Jackson Health System has partnered with nearly 55 churches, synagogues and mosques in Miami-Dade County with the goal of reaching people who are age 65 and older in underserved communities.

5. Check with your church, synagogue, or mosque to see if they have any plans in the works. Jackson Health System, Miami-Dade County's public hospital network, for example, began collaborating with more than 50 houses of worship in Miami-Dade County to help reach seniors in underserved communities who may have challenges with technology and are unable to secure an appointment online.

6. Check with your local commissioner's office to see if there is anything in the works, and if there is, ask how you can get on the wait list or receive updates. Jackson Health last month, for example, gave Miami-Dade County's 13 commissioners and Miami-Dade Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava***'s office a limited amount of ***vaccine*** appointments they could give out. Commissioners had mixed reactions to the idea, so it's unclear if it will happen again. Miami City Hall has also begun vaccination efforts in the community such as setting up vaccination pods at senior facilities and creating a mobile vaccination program for homebound seniors to be vaccinated. If you live inside Miami city limits, you can find the contact information for your elected official at [*https://www.miamigov.com/Government/City-Officials*](https://www.miamigov.com/Government/City-Officials)

New ***COVID***-19 mobile vaccination program launched in Little HavanaCommissioner Joe Carollo, Mayor Francis Suarez, Congresswoman María Elvira Salazar and Senator Ileana García attended the launch of a mobile vaccination program that will serve senior communities in the city of Miami.

7. Follow Twitter accounts that post appointment availability in your county and set up notification alerts. This way, every time the accounts tweet, you'll be notified with a ding on your phone. In Miami-Dade County, for example, two accounts posting updates are Jackson Health System (@JacksonHealth) and Miami-Dade County Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** (@MayorDaniella). And if you need some help, don't be afraid to recruit family members in your vaccination search.

IMG\_9733.PNGClick the notification icon (it looks like a bell) to be notified every time a Twitter account tweets.

Some Facebook groups like South Florida ***COVID***-19 Vaccination Info also post appointment availability information.

8. Look for patterns. Getting an appointment is like winning the lottery: You never know when it will happen. But some places do open slots on the same day or around the same time. Publix, for example, usually opens slots on Wednesdays and Fridays early in the morning. For now, Publix stores in Miami-Dade and Broward do not offer vaccines. Jackson Health System tends to announce appointment availability between 8 a.m. and 8:55 a.m., though the days vary. At night, it's been announcing ***vaccine*** slots between 8 p.m. to 9 p.m. Another good tip: Get on the websites immediately to increase your chances of snagging a spot when the portal opens.

9. Check for appointments in neighboring counties. A Florida resident in Miami-Dade or Monroe, for example, can get the ***vaccine*** in Broward County or vice versa.

10. Try incognito mode on your device. Some online blogs say the feature can help people book Disney vacations, and according to Slate, one woman used the feature to secure multiple vaccination appointments in New York state. Will it work in Florida? Who knows, but it's worth a shot.

And finally, even with all these tips, be patient. More vaccination sites are expected to open across Florida as ***vaccine*** supplies become more available, and eventually, pharmacies like CVS, Walmart and Walgreens will have vaccines in stock, too.

Miami Herald staff writers Gwen Filosa and Joey Flechas contributed to this report.

Still need a ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine***? Here's how to keep track of availability

**Load-Date:** February 6, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Marlins backlash lives on: County commissioners balk at $4M settlement with Loria*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:61X6-WVJ1-DYJM-M1X2-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

February 2, 2021 Tuesday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** miami\_dade

**Length:** 695 words

**Byline:**  Douglas Hanks

Miami Herald

**Body**

Miami-Dade commissioners had a chance Tuesday to retire a legal battle with former Marlins owner Jeffrey Loria over the paper loss he claimed on the $1.2 billion sale of the team to Derek Jeter and partners.

Commissioners chose to keep the fight alive.

After a heated discussion, the board voted to delay voting on the proposed $4.2 million settlement of a 2018 lawsuit the county filed against Loria and the current Marlins ownership.

The fight is over the math behind a 5% profit-sharing deal Loria entered with Miami-Dade and Miami 12 years ago in exchange for the governments contributing about $500 million for a new ballpark and parking complex in Little Havana.

A loss on a $1.2 billion Marlins sale?

"This is nowhere near what we could get," said Commissioner Joe Martinez, one of four commissioners who voted against the agreement in 2009. "The more your hear about it, the worse this deal was for Miami-Dade County. We were suckered."

Miami joined the county suit as a plaintiff, and would get $563,000 from the settlement. City commissioners approved the agreement last week. The case only settles if Miami-Dade goes along, requiring a commission vote to accept the county's $3.6 million share.

Commissioners voted to defer a decision shortly after one of the lawyers on the board, Sally Heyman, pointed out the settlement recommendation came from the administration of Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** and not from the County Attorney's Office.

Heyman said the county shouldn't accept the Loria assertion that a franchise he and partners purchased for $158 million somehow yielded a $141 million loss on a $1.2 billion sale, based on the profit-sharing formula laid out in the original 2009 deal. That deal allowed Loria a string of deductions that his accountants summarized in letters to the county. Heyman said she wanted to see the documents behind the numbers, and was happy to have Miami-Dade lawyers keep pressing for the evidence during arbitration.

"Just show us the information," she said. "Today is an opportunity to finish strong for Miami-Dade County, and end this game fairly for all of the players ...Most especially, the taxpayers. I'm voting against the settlement."

Tuesday's meeting revived one of the sorest spots in county government. Chairman Jose "Pepe" Diaz seconded the original resolution that sealed Miami-Dade funding for the county-owned ballpark, with debt payments approaching $2 billion over several decades.

Though she had sponsored a resolution as a county commissioner directing any Marlins settlement to transportation projects, Levine Cava now recommends most of the Loria payment be set aside to cover debt and other expenses normally paid for by hotel taxes ravaged by the ***COVID***-19 pandemic.

Revisiting the ire from 2009 Miami Marlins deal

Heyman and Martinez are the only two commissioners who voted against the 2009 deal who are still sitting on the commission, which saw its first wave of term-limit departures in November. Diaz is one of three sitting commissioners who voted for the agreement, along with Rebeca Sosa and Javier Souto.

Monica Rizo, an assistant county attorney handling the Marlins suit, confirmed the settlement recommendation came from the Levine Cava administration. In comments to the commission, she suggested the county could end up with less money if Miami-Dade continued with arbitration with Loria and the existing Marlins organization, also a defendant in the case.

"This recommendation is coming from the administration," she said. "In light of the contractual language that was approved... and the constraints that that language has," she said, "we would say this settlement is within the bounds of reason. It's up to this board as the ultimate decision-makers whether or not to accept it."

Before she spoke, Heyman said she had to switch to the "appropriate ***mask*** for this one" and pulled out a face covering with the Edvard Munch painting known as "The Scream." She said she wanted Miami-Dade lawyers to continue the fight.

"I'm asking for basic diligence," she said. "You can't play on a public field without playing by public rules."

scream 2The famous painting "The Scream" by Edvard Munch.

**Load-Date:** February 2, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*How people looking for COVID vaccines struggle with and conquer a digital divide*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:61WH-NJP1-DYJM-M3V1-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

January 30, 2021 Saturday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** coronavirus

**Length:** 2458 words

**Byline:**  Howard Cohen and Michelle Marchante

Miami Herald

**Body**

Win the lottery or nail an appointment for a ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** dose in South Florida? For thousands of seniors, their friends and family members and caregivers, getting a shot might feel like winning the lottery.

That's how valuable -- and seemingly hard to get -- that appointment is given how demand far outstrips supply. And it's also telling how technology tools are not always accessible to every member of a community.

In a world where many seniors don't have computers or computer skills, asking an older population to constantly check websites, navigate links, monitor Twitter alerts as appointments open, close, then open again, has been a challenge.

"We are hearing more deep frustration than success stories from seniors 65-plus trying to sign up to receive the ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** in Florida," said Jeff Johnson, state director for AARP Florida.

"The sign-up process is cumbersome and time consuming, even for younger adults helping parents or older relatives," he said. "There is a lack of sign-up process standardization among ***vaccine*** providers even in the same city and the state's ***vaccine*** locator does not always offer a phone option for providers."

'Like winning the Lotto'

Lourdes Diaz knows how it is. She said Mount Sinai Medical Center reached out to her 91-year-old mother on Dec. 23 because her mom is a patient. Diaz said she called the Miami Beach hospital to get an appointment for her, left messages and emails. "I even used Twitter, but no luck."

Her mom, she said, does not know how to use the internet.

"I was finally able to get my mother an appointment at Jackson Health. I got lucky," Diaz said. "They were supposed to open the appointment portal at 11 a.m. but it was already open when I checked in around 10 a.m. Registering was quick and I had no problems. The appointment itself went great. We were ushered in right away and everything was very organized. My mother has her second appointment this week."

But Diaz said trying to secure those shots at both hospitals pulled her away from her own work responsibilities for about 10 hours as she spent time researching and reaching out.

"Thankfully, I was working remotely and had the flexibility to be persistent," Diaz said. "But this has been a very frustrating experience. I believe everyone is trying their best, but there are so many barriers. It's like winning the lotto."

Digital divide

According to Pew Research Center, Americans 60 and older are spending more time with computers -- on desktops, laptops or smart phones.

In 2000, 14% of those ages 65 and older were internet users. Now, 73% are, according to Pew. "And while smartphone ownership was uncommon at all ages around the turn of the 21st century, now about half (53%) of people 65 and older are smartphone owners."

At the same time, Pew's research found that about 30% of adults in low-income households below $30,000 a year don't own a smartphone. More than 40% lack home broadband services or a traditional computer and even fewer own tablets. "By comparison, each of these technologies is nearly ubiquitous among adults in households earning $100,000 or more a year."

But that doesn't mean that seniors who have the technology use it to full benefit. Sometimes the digital divide also widens because of declining health. Maybe it's a vision problem. Or, simply, some people of all ages just don't care to use computers.

But even among those who do, that may not be enough. ***Vaccine*** appointment alerts are coming fast and furious on social media, in places beyond the comfort of Facebook.

Computer savvy not enough

Take Mirna Miranda from Miami-Dade. She has the kind of computer tech-savvy that might impress producers of a "WarGames" movie remake.

Like many of the 4.5 million seniors 65 and older living in Florida, the 70-year-old and her 75-year-old husband, Carlos, wanted ***COVID***-19 vaccines. Seniors 65 and older are eligible for the two-dose Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna vaccines.

The Mirandas called appointment hotlines like Mount Sinai Medical Center and left voicemails. No one ever called them back, they said.

They tried online portals in Miami-Dade and Broward, but appointment slots were always closed.

So Mirna decided to set up three computers inside her Tamiami-area home so the pair could work together to search and book appointments online. They were willing to drive across county lines to Broward, the Keys or Palm Beach to be vaccinated.

The couple's strategy worked. Or so they thought.

Two days before they were set to receive their first shot at Baptist Health in Kendall, the hospital canceled all first-dose appointments because of supply constraints.

The Mirandas, and many like them, were back to where they started. Then Carlos saw a Miami Herald article that had tips on how to use Twitter to be notified about ***vaccine*** availability. He followed Jackson Health and set the account to send instant alerts any time Jackson tweeted. Last Saturday, while having coffee, his phone pinged with an alert: Jackson Health System was opening slots.

"We rushed to our three computers, working side by side and were able to book the appointments for that same day in the afternoon," Carlos said.

The couple received their first dose at Jackson South Medical Center and said the process went smoothly.

After first-day bugs, common to every location, Jackson streamlined the ***vaccine***-delivery process. Seniors, for the most part, have reported that they have been greeted by friendly staff. Well-organized, the whole process has generally taken about 30 to 40 minutes at Jackson-run sites.

But you have to get to that point -- and for many seniors and their caretakers, the digital divide to secure an appointment can feel like a bridge too far.

MIA\_***COVID\_VACCINE***\_DAV1Miami-Dade residents 65 or older line up in their cars as they wait for the ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** at Tropical Park in Miami, Florida, on Sunday, January 10, 2021. All vaccination sites in the county require an appointment and no walk-ins are permitted.

New features to get appointments

Healthcare providers are trying to make it easier. On Friday, Florida opened a new website to help seniors and other eligible residents opt in to a "save their place in line" feature through a pre-registration process.

Healthcare workers with direct patient contact and long-term care residents and staff can also pre-register for the ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine***. The website is myvaccine.fl.gov. Pre-registration by phone is also available. For Miami-Dade, call 888-499-0840 or TTY 888-256-8918. For Broward, call 866-201-6313 or TTY 844-252-2003. And for the Florida Keys, call 866-201-7069 or TTY 833-990-2908.

Florida residents who do not meet the priority criteria can also sign up through the website to receive email, text or phone updates that should tell them when they will be eligible to receive the ***vaccine***.

To help bridge the gulf, some South Florida institutions have altered the process as they see what works and what hasn't worked so well.

"Aside from creating an online enrollment portal for people to book appointments, we have created key partnerships to make sure people in hard-to-reach areas have access to the ***vaccine***," said Jackson Health spokeswoman Lidia Amoretti.

MIA\_202VaccineTropPark13NEWPPPNurses prepare ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** shots for Miami-Dade County residents with appointments at Tropical Park in Miami on Wednesday, Jan. 13, 2021.

Trying to reach underserved communities

Among them: Jackson began collaborating with more than 50 houses of worship in Miami-Dade County -- churches, synagogues, mosques. The goal is to reach seniors in underserved communities who may have challenges with technology and are unable to secure an appointment online, Amoretti said.

"Our goal is to continue dedicating one day of the week to vaccinate members of these houses of worship as long as we continue to receive vaccines from the state and there is demand from this group. So far, we have filled more than 5,550 appointment slots through this partnership," she said.

There is demand, the Rev. John White of Immanuel Temple AME Church in Pembroke Pines told the Miami Herald in January.

"There is a great need in the African-American community," White said. " I challenge all healthcare providers to partner with African-American churches if you want inroads to get people the ***vaccine***. We all have members who want it."

Florida's ***vaccine*** partnership with Publix as a major dispensary of the doses has also faced criticism for leaving large numbers of low-income and Black neighborhoods at a disadvantage. There aren't enough Publix supermarkets in these neighborhoods or close by, an analysis by the Sun Sentinel found.

As of late January, the only Publix supermarkets in South Florida that are on board are those in Palm Beach County and two stores in the Keys -- Islamorada and Key West.

At Publix, will you be in a long line to get ***COVID vaccine***? Here's how the process works

In late January, Dr. Anthony Fauci told The New England Journal of Medicine that people of color in underserved communities should receive prioritization in the vaccination rollout.

Jackson Heath is trying out partnerships with a few non-religious community groups such as Haitian Neighborhood Center Sant La, the Little Havana Activities Center, Southwest Social Services and the Center for Haitian Studies, Amoretti said. The hospital chain is also working with the Homeless Trust to expand vaccination of shelter clients who are 65 and older.

In addition, the county hospital partnered with different Miami-Dade County Commission districts as part of its outreach efforts by offering each commissioner 100 slots to fill. Miami-Dade Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** also received 1,300 slots.

Levine Cava also announced a new telephone hotline option where seniors can call 305-614-2014 to book an appointment. The website, at miamidade.gov/***vaccine***, is still active, too.

The county is also planning to launch a website and phone system, possibly next week, that will allow people 65 and over to pre-register for a vaccination appointment at county-run sites like Tropical Park and Zoo Miami.

Making the process equitable

Jackson filled appts tweet

Rachel Johnson, spokeswoman for the Office of the Miami-Dade Mayor, acknowledged the partnerships the county has undertaken are to help get more seniors vaccinated since it's so difficult to book in the traditional sense, via online or even telephone.

"A huge priority is to make sure we are distributing the vaccines not just efficiently but ... we are working to make the process more equitable. We can't just be delivering information online and sharing the phone number but we need to reach people in other ways, where they are," Johnson said.

"We know the online system doesn't work for everyone. It's frustrating for a lot of people," she said.

As of Jan. 29, according to Florida's ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** report, more than 1.3 million people have received the first dose of the coronavirus ***vaccine*** and 273,249 people have completed the two-dose series of either Pfizer or Moderna.

Of those who completed the two-dose vaccination, 41,045 were Miami-Dade residents, 28,799 were Broward residents, 17,513 were Palm Beach residents and 485 were Monroe residents.

But we've a way to go. There are about 454,000 people 65 and older in Miami-Dade and about 334,000 in Broward, for instance, according to Census figures.

Helping Miami's visually impaired

The visually impaired or blind are another group to consider, said Virginia Jacko, president of Miami Lighthouse for the Blind and Visually Impaired. Too often, she said, they are isolated.

"Visually impaired people are so often forgotten about," Jacko said.

Jacko suggests the use of widgets on websites to help the visually impaired navigate sites. So far, she said, the county, Jackson and UHealth are compliant.

She also said that Walgreens and the Lighthouse have partnered in an arrangement that would have Walgreens administer doses at the Lighthouse in early March, assuming the pharmacy has enough inventory. The plan is that Walgreens, with Lighthouse's guidance, would arrange for proper social distancing during the vaccination process, which can be especially challenging for that community.

Walgreens is currently administering doses at nursing care facilities, according to the company, but expects to begin the program with the Lighthouse around the first week of March.

Tapping Facebook's reach

IMG-9802.JPGBroward Health nurse Katherine Quirk and fiancé Russ Schwartz, a school principal in Broward County, run a Facebook group that helps seniors book ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** appointments.

Other savvy South Floridians have also thought outside the box to help seniors during the crisis.

Katherine Quirk, a Broward Health nurse, and her fiancé, Russ Schwartz, started a Facebook group to share information about appointment availability in South Florida and help book slots for seniors. The couple's Facebook group, South Florida ***COVID***-19 Vaccination Info, has more than 17,000 members.

Johnson, the state director for AARP Florida, says every improvement and novel idea couldn't come at a more critical time.

"It would be very helpful to have a standardized sign-up process for any provider in the same city, widely promoted telephone options for those that are not tech savvy or do not own a computer or smart phone, options for the homebound and those that do not have their own transportation, and finally a ***vaccine*** supply that is deployable and that matches the demand," Johnson said.

"We have digitized most social and health services, a shift that has left older seniors and underserved communities without access," Johnson said. "While there is efficiency in online ***vaccine*** sign-up, we must include options for those that are unable to navigate the technology or do not have access to a computer or a smart phone."

'I don't want to die from this disease'

Barbara Solomon, 72, and her church sewing group make quilts and pillowcases for children with cancer.

But since March, Solomon says she hasn't been able to gather with her group and rarely leaves her West Kendall home because of the pandemic. Even with a ***mask*** on, she's still scared it might not be enough protection because her heart condition and diabetes put her at "at risk" of severe ***COVID***-19 complications.

"Everything is booked," the retired Miami-Dade County Public Schools assistant principal said Wednesday.

Solomon hasn't had any luck by phone or online. She also doesn't "do Twitter," so she's missed Miami-Dade and Jackson's alerts.

Florida has more than 200 Publix pharmacies administering ***COVID***-19 vaccines but none are close to her yet. And pharmacies like CVS, Walmart and Walgreens are not yet distributing vaccines to the general public locally.

"I just want to get registered," Solomon said. "I don't want to die from this disease."

**Load-Date:** February 1, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Miami-Dade mayor: No more scramble for vaccine slots. Just join the waiting list*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:61WG-BT71-JC3J-X37Y-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

January 29, 2021 Friday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** miami\_dade

**Length:** 1156 words

**Byline:**  Douglas Hanks

Miami Herald

**Body**

Miami-Dade Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** pledged to close the income and racial gaps in the county's ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** plan, announcing plans for a booking process that lets seniors sign up in advance for appointments rather than scramble when slots are announced online.

"Your access to a computer, or the ZIP code where you live, should not determine how quickly you can get vaccinated," Levine Cava said during her first State of the County address.

How older people looking for ***COVID*** vaccines struggle with and conquer a digital divide

The Friday morning speech was delivered online from County Hall, a first for a report required by the Miami-Dade charter and typically held at an auditorium crowded with administrators, elected officials and lobbyists. She spoke after commission Chairman Jose "Pepe" Diaz, who said he was "proud to introduce our first madam mayor."

Though Levine Cava convened an audience at the Arsht Center for her inaugural address in November, she chose a video address for the first State of the County event during the ***COVID***-19 pandemic. Like her predecessor, Republican Congressman Carlos Gimenez, Levine Cava contracted ***COVID*** in November and has since recovered.

A moment for those who died of ***COVID***-19

The 65-year-old grandmother and lawyer, who spent six years on the County Commission before winning the November mayoral election, praised Miami-Dade's perseverance through a pandemic emergency first declared by Gimenez 324 days ago, on March 11.

She asked for a moment of silence for the nearly 5,000 people who died with confirmed ***COVID***-19 cases in Miami-Dade, as well as those who died across the country.

"There is not a single person listening who hasn't made sacrifices over the last year," Levine Cava said, after removing a white ***mask*** to begin her address.

"My husband and I contracted the virus and recovered," said Levine Cava, who believes she got ***COVID***-19 after her physician husband, Dr. Robert Cava, treated a patient who tested positive for the virus. "We are so fortunate. Yet, we have not been able to hug or kiss our two small grandchildren for nearly a year, which has been enormously hard, a struggle I know is shared by so many others."

Levine Cava, elected in November, centered her speech on a theme of making government more equitable and responsive to helping the environment and the economy.

"We can tackle this moment not just as a crisis, but a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to rebuild," she said in a speech that included lines in Spanish and Creole. "Building a more resilient Miami-Dade means not just weathering this crisis but rearranging the foundations so that we can rebuild better."

Miami-Dade's wealthiest ZIP codes are also the most vaccinated for ***COVID***-19, data shows

She said the county will operate under a "no wrong door" approach to social services, so that anyone seeking help from Miami-Dade won't be told to start over with a different agency. She repeated a campaign promise to launch an Office of Equity and Inclusion to focus on minority access to county contracting.

South Dade's bus line going forward

Levine Cava also touted plans to start construction soon on a new rapid-transit bus line in South Miami-Dade, a formal rejection of calls by Commissioner Kionne McGhee to freeze that contract in order to pursue a rail extension on the same route. County leaders have previously rejected the rail option over its $1 billion price tag, and McGhee -- elected in November to represent the southern District 9 -- signaled this week that Levine Cava had rejected his request.

"Unfortunately, we have not seen any indication of the required local governmental support that would make rail possible," McGhee said in a statement Wednesday. The "handwriting is on the wall that the desires and needs of South Dade will once again be disregarded."

In effort to vaccinate Black Miamians, religious leaders, community groups step up

The main news out of Levine Cava's speech involved the new system for vaccination appointments for the limited supply Florida sends for county-run sites at Tropical Park and Zoo Miami. Jackson Health's media office said the new system would not involve appointments for the county-run hospital network.

The current county system largely revolves around online reservation portals that can open hours -- or minutes -- after an announcement on Levine Cava's Twitter feed, which has become a must-follow for people wanting the most recent information on ***vaccine*** options.

The tech-heavy system -- and the central role of the mayor's social media platform -- helped fuel complaints of a process that favors people with the time and resources to track Twitter and quickly pounce when reservations open again. This week, the Levine Cava administration launched a telephone line allowing for ***vaccine*** reservations without a computer.

Black ZIP codes worst for ***COVID*** vaccination

***Vaccine*** data show the county's wealthiest ZIP codes also have some of the county's highest vaccination rates. The gap falls along racial lines, too. The 10 ZIP codes with the highest portion of Black residents in Miami-Dade also have seven of the county's 10 lowest vaccination rates, according to data from Miami-Dade and the Census.

"While we have quickly put systems in place to distribute vaccines efficiently and safely, we must also ensure they're being distributed equitably to protect all our communities and to move forward together," she said.

Florida residents who want a ***COVID vaccine*** can now pre-register online and by phone

She described a system that a spokeswoman confirmed would end the closely watched announcements of new vaccination appointments by the county. Instead, Miami-Dade plans to open phone lines and a website allowing people 65 and over to register once, and then be notified when supplies arrive to accommodate them for vaccinations. Florida launched a similar system this week for state-run vaccination sites at Hard Rock Stadium and Marlins Park.

The new county system, expected to debut next week, will mean "no need to constantly re-apply. And it will allow us to fairly allocate vaccines as quickly as we receive new supplies," Levine Cava said.

Commissioner Raquel Regalado introduced a bill instructing Levine Cava to create the kind of system the mayor announced Friday. Regalado, who represents the southern reaches of Miami and its suburbs, said the current system has commission offices flooded by seniors unable to navigate online vaccination options. That causes a scramble when Miami-Dade announces new vaccination slots.

"If you went by County Hall, you see all of our staffers logging in to the Miami-Dade portal," Regalado said. "Everybody was trying to get different people in. That's why a comprehensive list would make more sense."

Rachel Johnson, Levine Cava's communications director, said the new system will end announcements for new ***vaccine*** openings because "we will be directly contacting people in our database."

**Load-Date:** January 30, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*In effort to vaccinate Black Miamians, religious leaders, community groups step up*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:61VT-SW01-JC3J-X07M-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

January 26, 2021 Tuesday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** coronavirus

**Length:** 1638 words

**Byline:**  C. Isaiah Smalls and Samantha J. Gross

Miami Herald

**Body**

State Sen. Shevrin Jones knew churches would be a part of early ***COVID***-19 vaccination efforts. In early January, he orchestrated one of the county's first vaccination sites at a Pembroke Park church, where his father is the founder and senior pastor.

But as ***vaccine*** distribution continues to stumble in Florida -- with Black communities especially lagging in getting the potentially life-saving shots -- the West Park Democrat now says church partnerships with state and county governments are more crucial than ever for building trust and getting shots in arms.

"There's a lot of things that I've disagreed with ... but it's a smart move," said Jones, who represents parts of Broward and northern Miami-Dade County. "Rather than just the state trying to build a list of African Americans, why not go to individuals who have these established relationships, like the church."

Jones and both of his parents had ***COVID***-19 in July.

Statistics show that Black Americans disproportionately lag on vaccination rates, and Miami-Dade County is no exception. Seven of the 10 Miami-Dade ZIP codes with the lowest vaccination rates have majority African-American populations, according to the latest state data, released last Thursday. To connect with more Black Miamians -- a group overrepresented in ***COVID*** deaths and hospitalizations and underrepresented in the ***vaccine*** rollout -- some faith leaders have moved to the forefront of the effort.

"It only makes sense that we look to the very safe haven that has always stood the test of time for the African American community to take the lead to ensure equity is had, as it relates to its people," said Miami-Dade Commissioner Kionne McGhee, a former Democratic state lawmaker.

Jackson Health System, Miami-Dade's public hospital system, has taken the lead on partnering with the county to reach seniors who may live in underserved communities or lack the ability to compete for appointments through online portals at hospitals or Publix pharmacies.

Every week the hospital opens up a limited number of appointments for 50 partner churches, synagogues and mosques to register members of their own congregations, as well as family members, friends and members of neighboring houses of worship. For now, the slots are limited to those 65 and older.

Jackson CEO Carlos Migoya said Tuesday that the outreach is meant to "leverage their grassroots access to our neighborhoods."

"We know that historically, Black churches are hubs of information and resources," Migoya said. "Our goal is for people of color who are 65 and older to have equal access to our ***vaccine***."

Jackson is also trying out partnerships with community groups like the Little Havana Activity Center, Southwest Social Services, the Center for Haitian Studies and the Miami-Dade County Homeless Trust to reach shelter clients who are over 65.

"Making inroads in hard-to-reach groups is challenging but so important," Migoya said.

Jones said ***COVID***-19 has shed a light on disparities that already exist, but that partnerships like the one Jackson has led help build on already established relationships in churches, with an extra focus on Black seniors in Miami, many of whom have been overlooked in the pandemic.

"There's an old saying that when the world catches the flu, the Black community catches pneumonia," Jones said.

Not just a Miami problem

The disparities in Florida's ***vaccine*** rollout are not limited to Miami-Dade, and Black community advocates in other parts of the state are taking similar approaches to try to educate underserved populations on the benefits of getting vaccinated.

A mid-November Pew Research poll -- from before the vaccines were actually being administered -- showed that just 42% of African Americans were planning to get vaccinated. That compared to 62% of whites, 63% of Hispanics and 83% of English-speaking Asians.

Dr. Leon Haley, CEO of UF Health Jacksonville, said statewide, the approach to outreach must be multifaceted and include leaders from faith-based organizations, but also community members and advocacy groups like the Urban League and the NAACP.

Not everyone belongs to a church, he said, and low vaccination rates among Black Floridians are not due solely to the limited supply. To increase vaccinations, there must be more education and trust building, as well as an understanding of historical context behind medical mistrust.

He gave the example of the Tuskegee experiment, which began in the 1930s when researchers studied the effects of untreated syphilis on hundreds of Black men without their consent.

"I think people want a singular answer," he said. "But it's not a singular issue."

Infection rates in the Black community have been disproportionately high across the country. That's due in part to Black overrepresentation in service work, which increases risk of exposure to ***COVID***, plus a greater likelihood of living with underlying illnesses such as hypertension and diabetes than their white counterparts.

With ***vaccine*** appointments requiring patients to sign up online, many Black Floridians may be at a greater disadvantage because their occupations may not allow them to be on a laptop or phone for most of the day. For seniors who are less savvy or don't have family to help them, the problem is heightened.

Jackson Health physician Dr. Inaki Bent saw this disparity play out firsthand while taking a family friend to get vaccinated on Monday. The friend, who had registered through New Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church, didn't quite mirror the other patients.

"I saw very few African Americans there, out of the maybe 50, 60 people either in line or sitting in the waiting area," Bent said.

Reverend John White, of Immanuel Temple A.M.E. Church in Pembroke Pines, said he noticed a similar disparity last week during a visit to the North Dade Health Center to drop off lunch for healthcare workers administering the vaccines to people who registered through churches, synagogues and mosques.

White said Friday that in addition to outreach and education, he hopes that the state does more to bring a greater supply of vaccines into Black communities. He noted that the Publix pharmacy ***vaccine*** sites are a good start, but was disappointed that Gov. Ron DeSantis skipped over Broward and Miami-Dade Counties when rolling out the initial program. The first counties in South Florida to get the Publix ***vaccine*** sites were Palm Beach and Monroe counties, which have smaller Black populations.

"That's just disheartening," he said. "But we're looking for other ways to partner with the state ... we are trying to get as many opportunities as we can to partner with whoever get the ***vaccine***."

Miami-Dade and Jackson administrators say they're still working to reach underserved communities by reserving some appointment slots for people who aren't as engaged with technology or as informed about the current vaccination system.

Jackson late last week allotted 1,300 appointment slots to Miami-Dade. Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava***'s administration has asked the county's emergency operations center to fill the appointments through community groups. The agency has run the county's emergency food distribution operations and pairs with non-profits to move vulnerable residents in advance of hurricanes. County administrators said those networks would be tapped to fill vaccination appointments, too.

"It's something we're trying to focus on aggressively, because of the equity issue," said J.D. Patterson, the county's chief public safety officer. "We're reaching out to those community groups that have those ties."

On Wednesday night, Miami-Dade's emergency operations center sent the United Way a spreadsheet with 400 open appointments at Jackson vaccination centers. United Way tapped its network of social service agencies, neighborhood centers and other non-profits it funds or works with to offer the slots to their clients. All 400 slots were filled within two hours, said Cristina Blanco, United Way's head of communications.

"The demand is high," Blanco said.

Going through the process

Islamic Center of Greater Miami member Khalid Mirza received the first dose of the ***COVID vaccine*** in early January through his masjid's partnership with Jackson Health. He said he was impressed by how well it was run, but he said he knew others would not have such an efficient experience. His 89-year-old father-in-law waited more than 3 1/2 hours to get vaccinated at Tropical Park, a site run by Miami-Dade County.

The elder population has "no patience to sit down and try to log in to make reservations," Mirza, 77, said.

Mirza proposed offering vaccinations at free clinics, especially those in areas with majority Black populations.

"We're working in communities that're underserved," said Mirza who sits on the board of UHI CommunityCare Clinic in Miami Gardens. "If we have the ***vaccine*** ourselves, we'll do it 24 hours a day."

Shirley Kemp, 71, said her decision to get vaccinated at the North Dade Health Center in Opa-locka last Friday took some thought.

Kemp, who lives in Opa-locka, was invited by her church, New Beginnings Missionary Baptist Church, which was one of the churches to partner with Jackson Health to schedule appointments for members and their families.

She said after she received her shot last week that like her Black neighbors and friends, she was scared at first "by talk," and by concerns of how it could affect someone like her. She has various underlying medical conditions.

She said for those who may still be scared or unsure, they should "get up and come out here."

"It's for you," she said. "It's for us."

Herald staff writer Douglas Hanks contributed to this report.

This article was updated to correct inaccurate information from the United Way on the number of vaccination slots the non-profit was given from Miami-Dade's Emergency Management agency. There were 400 slots.

**Load-Date:** January 27, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Miami-Dade now has a new COVID vaccine appointment hotline -- and slots are available*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:61VR-3K01-DYJM-M4P9-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

January 26, 2021 Tuesday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** coronavirus

**Length:** 74 words

**Byline:**  Michelle Marchante

Miami Herald

**Body**

Miami-Dade County has a limited amount of ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** appointments available again -- and this time seniors 65 and older can book a slot through the phone instead of going online.

Miami-Dade Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** announced the new hotline Tuesday afternoon.

Starting at 2 p.m., seniors will be able to visit miamidade.gov/***vaccine*** or call 305-614-2014 to book an appointment.

This article will be updated.

Miami flash briefing player embed

**Load-Date:** January 26, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Can't make a COVID vaccine appointment by computer? Here's where you can call instead*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:61VH-4CC1-JC3J-X460-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

January 25, 2021 Monday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** coronavirus

**Length:** 712 words

**Byline:**  Michelle Marchante

Miami Herald

**Body**

Seniors trying to get a ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** in South Florida are coming across a roadblock that for some, is making it even more difficult to book an appointment: technology.

Many of the vaccination sites in Miami-Dade and Broward counties, including hospitals, have relied on websites to schedule appointments. Jackson Health System, Miami-Dade County's public hospital network, has also relied on Twitter to announce when slots go live. So has Miami-Dade County Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava***.

For some seniors, that could mean relying on younger family or friends to book appointments for them. For others who might be on their own, don't have access to reliable internet or don't like using the computer, it can feel like they're last in line.

There are some South Florida vaccination sites, however, that take appointments by phone. This list will be updated as more sites become available. Keep in mind that appointment availability will vary, depending on what day and time you call. And remember, you will be asked to show proof of Florida residency at the site.

How to make a ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** appointment by phone in Miami-Dade, Broward

Florida now has a statewide pre-registration website and hotline. Seniors, healthcare workers with direct patient contact, long-term care staff and residents, and people with health conditions that make them "at risk" of severe ***COVID*** complications can pre-register to be notified when appointments become available at state-run sites in their county. All other Florida residents can sign up for updates on when they can get the ***vaccine***.

For those in Miami-Dade County who don't have Internet access or would prefer to schedule an appointment by phone, you can call 888-499-0840 or TTY 888-256-8918. For Broward County, call 866-201-6313 or TTY 844-252-2003. For the Florida Keys, call 866-201-7069 or TTY 833-990-2908. For Palm Beach County, call 866-201-6754 or TTY 833-476-1532.

Keep in mind that not all counties will opt-in to this system but you can still pre-register with a county that is.

Miami-Dade County schedules appointments for several vaccination sites including Zoo Miami and Tropical Park. Seniors 65 and older now have the option to call 305-614-2014 instead of using the online portal to book a slot. Miami-Dade Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** posts updates about ***vaccine*** availability on Twitter.

Hard Rock Stadium in Miami Gardens, a popular ***COVID***-19 testing site, is offering vaccinations by appointment to seniors 65 and older and front-line healthcare workers. Call 888-499-0840 or the TTY line at 888-256-8918.

Popular ***COVID***-19 testing site Marlins Park in Miami also has vaccines. For now, there is no municipal residency requirement, which means you do not need to live within city limits to be vaccinated. Miami Mayor Francis Suarez wants to change that. For now, you just need to show proof of Florida residency. To schedule an appointment, call 888-499-0840. The number for the hearing impaired is 888-256-8918.

Leon Medical Centers are scheduling vaccination appointments for seniors 65 and older. Those who seek care at Leon should call customer service at 305-642-5366 to make an appointment. If you need transportation, let the operator know so they can also schedule a driver to pick you up. Leon will continue to offer appointments until it runs out of vaccines.

The Florida Department of Health in Broward County has changed its scheduling process. Front-line healthcare workers and seniors 65 and older can now call 866-201-6313 to see if slots are available. The number for the hearing impaired is 833-476-1526.

Appointments are available at the numbers above for the following Broward locations:

Tradewinds Park, 3600 W. Sample Rd., Coconut Creek

Vista View Park, 4001 SW 142nd Ave., Davie

Markham Park & Target Range, 16001 W. State Road 84 in Sunrise

Snyder Park, 3299 SW Fourth Ave., set to open Tuesday.

Central Broward Park and Broward County Stadium, 3700 NW 11th Pl. in Lauderhill.

Coral Square Mall in Coral Springs.

Mount Sinai Medical Center in Miami Beach, Broward Health and Memorial Healthcare System were taking appointments by phone but slots filled up quickly.

More than 200 Publix stores in Florida have ***COVID*** vaccines. Here is the growing list

This article will be updated.

**Load-Date:** January 30, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*With limited vaccines at Florida hospitals, those with underlying conditions out of options*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:61VK-TTC1-DYJM-M244-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

January 25, 2021 Monday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** coronavirus

**Length:** 1138 words

**Byline:**  Samantha J. Gross

Miami Herald

**Body**

Matthew Smith's favorite ***mask*** in his colorful collection of ***COVID*** face coverings is the forest green Baptist Health-branded one he received in a Christmas stocking from his adult day program.

Smith, 31, was preparing to wear his green ***mask*** when he went to get his ***vaccine*** at Baptist on Feb. 2. Baptist was the only hospital in South Florida taking appointments for those with underlying health conditions, including Down syndrome. His sister, Rosemary Smith Hoel, snagged him a spot after an hour of refreshing the hospital system's online portal to grab an appointment the moment one became available.

Gov. Ron DeSantis' December executive order on who can obtain vaccines included people like Smith, who are under 65 years old but have underlying health conditions that make them considerably more vulnerable to ***COVID***-19 and its effects. Under the executive order, people in that category must get their vaccines through a hospital program like Baptist's.

When Baptist canceled all first dose appointments last week citing a lack of supply, Smith's sister, Rosemary Hoel, felt defeated. Baptist was the only place she could find that would vaccinate her brother. Other South Florida sites, like the ones supported by Jackson Health System, Miami-Dade County or the state, are only serving healthcare workers or those 65 and older.

When Baptist ended its ***vaccine*** appointments, hundreds of people like Smith were left without an option.

"We have been really, really anxious to protect him," said Hoel, who lives in Palmetto Bay with her brother, her husband and their two children. Her husband and son are currently sick with ***COVID***-19, and are staying in the family's camper to isolate themselves.

People with Down syndrome, the most common chromosomal disorder, aren't more susceptible to catching the virus but if infected, are five times more likely to be hospitalized and 10 times more likely to die than the general population, according to a large U.K. study published in the Annals of Internal Medicine in October. The study concluded that the risks originate from the fact that Down syndrome is associated with pulmonary disease, immune dysfunction and congenital heart disease.

DeSantis' December executive order says: "during the first phase of the ***vaccine*** rollout, all providers administering any ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** shall only vaccinate the following populations: Long-term care facility residents and staff; persons 65 years of age and older; and health care personnel with direct patient contact."

It then says that "hospital providers, however, also may vaccinate persons who they deem to be extremely vulnerable to ***COVID***-19."

But as the ***vaccine*** supply from the federal government to hospitals lags while other vaccination sites start to pop up in places like Publix pharmacies, hospitals have had to cancel appointments and scramble to notify patients that they don't have enough ***vaccine*** to make new appointments.

"America's inability to provide enough vaccines has put hospitals in an intractable position," said Kenneth Goodman, a professor at University of Miami and director of the school's Institute for Bioethics and Health Policy.

Goodman said if the state was more forthcoming about how it chose its criteria for vaccinations and perhaps allowed people with underlying conditions to be vaccinated outside a hospital setting, things could be different.

"It's our collective fault for not having been prepared for this," he said. "Getting it right ethically involves a lot more transparency than we so far experienced."

Like Smith, Kathleen Eckhart, a 62-year-old cancer patient, had her appointment canceled at Baptist and now has nowhere to turn. She said she's been told by Broward County that state-supported vaccination sites may change their policy soon. But for now, she waits and limits her time outside her home the best she can. Even so, cancer patients still have to attend doctor's appointments and pick up medication at pharmacies, which puts them at risk, Eckhart, of Boca Raton, said.

"It would be a death sentence. You just know," she said. "When you go through a cancer treatment, it's just going to drive down your immune system. We are just more susceptible to getting it."

Sarah Bramblette, 43, was one of the lucky ones who got into Baptist before they canceled all appointments. Bramblette, who has skin and lymphatic disorders, is a healthcare and insurance advocate and public speaker.

She said since the pandemic hit, it has been hard to have her medical needs met. Her physical therapy treatments were limited and trips to the emergency room due to infections were complicated by ***COVID***-19 precautions.

Seeing the governor's order including people with underlying conditions gave her hope, but she said that even though she was able to get the initial shot, she still feels the language was mostly "lip service."

"They want to say we are the priority, but in reality, we are not a priority," said Bramblette, who lives in Miami Shores.

The shortage and the fallout

After Baptist and Mount Sinai Medical Center, which was not taking patients under 65, canceled thousands of ***COVID***-19 vaccination appointments last week due to lack of supply, Miami-Dade Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** signed an emergency order that she says will give the county more control over the vaccination process by ending hospital overbooking.

Baptist issued a statement saying it had been operating under a directive from the state mandating hospitals vaccinate as many eligible people as possible, as quickly as possible, and had been assured by the state that they would receive additional vaccines as needed "without limitation."

According to the News Service of Florida, Surgeon General Scott Rivkees told hospital officials last week that he does not know when additional first doses of the Pfizer-BioNtech or Moderna vaccines will be sent to the state or how many doses would be in a future shipment.

Gigi Gronvall, a senior scholar at the Johns Hopkins Center for Health Security, said more vaccines will likely correct the supply problems states like Florida are facing but added that the bumpy rollout and competitive nature of securing a vaccination slot stem from a lack of federal coordination among states.

"It is a symptom of the way things have been going and it shows you the limitations of that approach because things are pretty horrible," she said. "The ultimate goal is to get everybody vaccinated. It's hard. The more barriers you create, the more challenges you have administering it."

As Smith's family hopes for another chance to sign him up for his first shot, they're trying to live by the mantra on a tie-dye shirt he wears, one he points to if anyone starts to bicker or get stressed.

"Stop. Smile. Deep breath. Relax," Hoel said. "That's what we are all trying to hold on to while we are anxiously awaiting."

**Load-Date:** January 26, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*A new president. Can partisans agree on COVID truths? DeSantis shifts the message*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:61VF-57V1-JC3J-X2V8-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

January 25, 2021 Monday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** politics\_policy\_in\_sunshine\_state

**Length:** 2194 words

**Byline:**  Mary Ellen Klas

Newsletters |

**Body**

It's Monday, Jan. 25, and we have a new president. "At this hour, my friends, democracy has prevailed." With those words, Joe Biden began his term as the 46th president of the United States. But while violence was averted and democracy prevailed for the moment, the news of the week demonstrated there is an enormous amount of work still needed to preserve it.

Consider this: After years of information warfare, the nation is in the midst of an epistemic crisis. Partisans disagree not just over policy, but on facts themselves. As Biden appeared to restore the norms of the presidency, mistrust in media and the willingness to tell truth from fiction are, as MIT's Yochai Benkler writes, "not symmetric across the partisan divide."

WHAT WE'RE WATCHING

One prolonged example of this cleavage is how ***COVID***-19 has inexplicably become a springboard for misinformation and partisan division. As one of his first acts in office, the nation's new president issued a blizzard of executive orders aimed at curbing the virus' spread.

***Mask*** mandates: Biden signed an executive order requiring international travelers to the U.S. to quarantine upon arrival and anyone crossing state lines to wear a ***mask*** to travel. The restrictions were welcome news for Rolando Aedo, chief operating officer of Miami-Dade's chief tourism marketing agency. The county has a ***mask*** mandate in a state where the Republican governor has banned local governments from enforcing it. "Whatever happens that will mitigate the spread of the virus while aggressively expanding the vaccinations will support traveler confidence," Aedo told us.

But Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis has resisted endorsing ***mask*** mandates despite the scientific evidence that shows they prevent the spread of the virus. And last week, he declared that Florida doesn't need the new distribution and messaging plan Biden outlined to improve allocation of the coronavirus ***vaccine***, the state just needs more ***vaccine***.

***Vaccine*** hesitancy and inequity: DeSantis is right that many problems would be solved with more ***vaccine***, but data from the Florida Department of Health continues to show high amounts of ***vaccine*** hesitancy and inequity across the state, raising doubts about how effective the state's messaging is. Of the roughly 138,000 people who have gotten the vaccines in Miami-Dade for example, just 8,265 -- or 6% -- identified as Black. And no one seems to know why large numbers of hospital workers, firefighters and paramedics who were offered early vaccinations for the virus declined.

Meanwhile, there are communities in Florida that want the ***vaccine*** but are losing out to people with better connections. A Miami Herald analysis of state vaccination data by zip code found that the wealthiest neighborhoods in Miami-Dade County have the most protection against ***COVID***-19, while the poorest areas have the least.

Overbooking chaos: Despite the sputtering ***vaccine*** supply, local distribution sites have spent the last month raising peoples' hopes but disappointing many. Two of Miami-Dade County's largest hospitals canceled thousands of ***COVID***-19 vaccination appointments due to lack of supply last week, prompting Miami-Dade Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** to sign an emergency order Friday to give the county more control over the vaccination process by ending hospital overbooking.

With little state direction, local officials are doing their best to handle the chaos. The head of Jackson Health told Miami-Dade's 13 county commissioners Friday that they would each receive 100 ***vaccine*** slots to fill, with the idea that commissioners will bridge the gap for those most in need. The idea was greeted with trepidation.

Florida leads variant cases: Also baffling is why Florida is leading the nation with the highest number of cases of the highly infectious B.1.1.7 'UK' coronavirus variant, 46.

Shifting message: As cases in Florida surge, DeSantis, who previously said his priority was to protect the elderly from getting infected with the virus, has shifted his message to talking only about the ***vaccine***. For the last month, he has traveled across the state touting new ***vaccine*** distribution sites, focused on getting shots in the arms of people over age 65. Absent from every event, however, is any talk about preventing infection for everyone else. Meanwhile, about four times as many Floridians are now dying from the disease every day, on average, compared to early November.

College superspreaders: A study of 30 college campuses suggests they are ***COVID***-19 superspreaders in their communities, with one in five students having gotten sick by end of fall semester.

Meanwhile, post-holiday surges in ***COVID***-19 infections are combining with the seasonal increase in patients and hospital officials throughout Florida now worry they will face serious staff shortages in the coming months.

WHAT WE'RE TALKING ABOUT

The change in governing style between Biden and Donald Trump will serve as an interesting contrast for Floridians who watch state government. When Biden Press Secretary Jen Psaki held her first press briefing, she began by saying: "I have deep respect for the role of a free and independent press in our democracy and for the role all of you play."

She then went on to answer questions. She held press conferences every day, saying that Biden wants to bring truth and transparency back. And while Biden delivered remarks every day last week, his policy leaders, in health care and the economy for example, provided the details.

By contrast, DeSantis has adopted Trump's approach to messaging and has positioned himself as the only person to explain his policies. He also uses his press staff to echo his talking points, instead of using them to provide data, insight and elaboration on his ideas and policies.

The result is that scores of questions from the media -- seeking detail, clarity and justification -- never get answered. News organizations have had to sue the administration three times to get ***COVID***-related public records. If transparency was a priority, would this be necessary?

Bomb threat: A day after the inauguration, Florida law-enforcement officials arrested a 61-year-old man who they say made a false bomb threat against the Florida Capitol in the wee hours of the night.

Florida pardons: On the way out the door, the former president made news. First were the pardons, releasing the stain of federal conviction or charges from rappers Lil Wayne and Kodak Black, convicted in Miami on weapons charges; Robert Zangrillo, the CEO of Miami-based investment firm Dragon Global, charged with bribery to get his daughter into USC; influential Miami banker Abel Holtz, who lied about bribes: Joe Exotic, of Tiger King fame whose real name is Joseph Maldonado-Passage and whose Oklahoma property was handed over to rival Carole Baskin of Big Cat Rescue in Tampa, and Palm Beach eye doctor Salomon Melgen, convicted for healthcare fraud case, whose sentence was commuted.

Deferred deportations: Then there was Trump's eleventh-hour executive order deferring the removal of Venezuelans currently in the United States for 18 months. The surprise decision was greeted with mixed emotions among immigration advocates and policy experts. Though the decision could benefit as many as 200,000 Venezuelans at risk of being sent back to the troubled South American nation, the benefit is only temporary.

Expanded waiver: Finally, the Trump administration gave Florida a parting gift of a Medicaid waiver of $1.5 billion per year until 2030. Florida had asked for two years. Was this intended to diminish the odds of the state expanding Medicaid, long an objective of state Democrats? Some say it is.

As Trump ended his speech at Joint Base Andrews, he said: "We will be back in some form...Have a good life. We will see you soon." Then Trump flew into Palm Beach International Airport, completing his snub of his successor's inaugural ceremony.

Where to next? The question Republicans are struggling to answer: Should they continue to organize themselves around loyalty to Trump or will they seek to broaden the base to include both his die-hard supporters and those who want to move beyond Trumpism? Will Ivanka Trump challenge Marco Rubio? Trump is popular in Florida but a second impeachment, his ban from Twitter, and fallout from the Capitol insurrection have muddied the outlook for his future.MIA\_0313TrumpWPBarrival012021.JPGTrump supporters await the arrival of US President Donald Trump and his motorcade along Southern Blvd on his way to Mar-a Lago in West Palm Beach on Wednesday, January 20, 2021.

There are defections: Paul Hernandez, a Hialeah city councilman for the past decade, told us he changed his voter registration from Republican to Democrat just hours after he watched a mob of Donald Trump supporters storm the U.S. Capitol.

There are loyalists: South Florida lawyer Carlos E. Silva, who helped Republicans try to challenge the results of the presidential election in Georgia, was among tens of thousands of Twitter users removed from the site in the aftermath of the riot in Washington. He had posted messages he said were given to him by one of Trump's most controversial allies.

Resisting climate accord: Miami's Congressional Republicans may represent some of the country's most vulnerable communities threatened by sea level rise but they gave signs last week that they are not going to support Biden's climate change legislation.

Immigration ambition: Biden's immigration plan came into sharper focus last week as Sen. Bob Menendez, D-N.J., provided the details. The proposal would offer a fast-track to legal status for approximately 11 million undocumented immigrants and will help reunite families. In a symbolic change, it also strikes the word "alien" from U.S. immigration documents.

Florida's two U.S. Senators have already expressed opposition to Biden's immigration bill and suggested that it will likely be a political issue raised by Republicans during the 2022 election cycle.

Immigration opposition: Sen. Marco Rubio said Biden's plan is a non-starter that amounts to "blanket amnesty." Florida Sen. Rick Scott, who will lead Senate Republicans' political arm for the next two years, released a statement blasting Biden's "radical immigration plan" and listed a number of Senate Democrats up for reelection in 2022.

But U.S. Rep. Mario Diaz-Balart, R-Miami, issued a statement pledging to work with the Biden Administration "to fix our broken immigration system once and for all."

Barrier breaking: As the U.S.'s next vice president, Kamala Harris is a person of many firsts: the nation's first female, first Black, first South Asian American and first Jamaican American to hold the second highest office. Artists, politicians and other luminaries from Antigua to Barbados to Jamaica celebrated her historical rise as "America's first Black Caribbean-American" vice president in a virtual celebration ahead of Wednesday's inauguration.

Jones surrenders: Former state employee Rebekah Jones, who was fired after claiming Florida was manipulating ***COVID*** data, surrendered last week to state police to face computer-related charges. She is fighting them.

No Jai Alai expansion: A controversial proposal to bring a jai alai fronton to Edgewater has been shot down in Miami-Dade Circuit Court. Judge Michael Hanzmann ruled the push by the owners of Magic City Casino, to bring gambling to Edgewater in downtown Miami was a "land use issue" that overruled any other permissions the company had been granted to pursue its pari-mutuel facilities.

Goodbye Nilda: Nilda Pedrosa, a top-ranking federal official from Miami-Dade County who led multiple Florida Republicans into victory, passed away on Saturday night after battling cancer. She was 46.

Biden taps Miami advocate: Shannon Estenoz, a longtime Everglades restoration advocate, was named the U.S. Department of Interior's principal deputy assistant secretary overseeing the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and National Park Service.

Elon and the mayor: After a Twitter exchange with Elon Musk, Miami Mayor Francis Suarez said he's trying to bring the Tesla and tunnel mogul to the city to "see what he has in mind."

Hope for Puerto Rican women: Puerto Rico Gov. Pedro Pierluisi declared a state of emergency Sunday over the island's gender violence crisis, a measure local groups have demanded from the government for years. The executive order allocates public resources to address femicides and other forms of violence against women.

It's all right: As singer Jon Bon Jovi sang on a South Florida pier as part of the virtual inaugural celebration: "Here Comes the Sun."

Stay well and we'd love to hear from you. Miami Herald Tallahassee Bureau Chief Mary Ellen Klas curated this newsletter. If you have any ideas or suggestions, please drop me a note at [*meklas@miamiherald.com*](mailto:meklas@miamiherald.com)

Please remember: the Miami Herald needs your support if we are to continue to supply the meaningful local journalism you count on during these unprecedented times. To support vital reporting such as this, please consider a subscription for unlimited digital access.

Know someone who'd like to get this? Send this to a friend to receive our weekly newsletter on politics and policy.

**Load-Date:** January 25, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*COVID vaccine live updates: What you should know in South Florida on Monday, Jan. 25*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:61VF-TN81-DYJM-M1DT-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

January 25, 2021 Monday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** coronavirus

**Length:** 2367 words

**Byline:**  Michelle Marchante

Miami Herald

**Body**

***COVID***-19 vaccines are now available in South Florida, and the rules on who can get a shot, where and when can be confusing.

Here's what you need to know:

What's new today?

Seniors trying to get a ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** in South Florida are coming across a roadblock, that for some, is making it even more difficult to book an appointment: technology. Many of the vaccination sites in Miami-Dade and Broward counties, including hospitals, have relied on websites to schedule appointments. There are a few sites, however, that are accepting appointments by phone, including Hard Rock Stadium in Miami Gardens and Vista View Park in Davie.

Moderna says new research shows its ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** does work on variants of the virus from the United Kingdom and South Africa. But, it will still create a new booster shot for the South African strain "out of an abundance of caution," Miami Herald news partner CBS4 reports.

Monroe County is expected to receive another 600 doses of the ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** in coming weeks, according to Monroe County's top health official. Bob Eadie, administrator of the Florida Department of Health in the Keys, said Monday that officials in the island chain, as well as businesses like Publix, have developed systems to vaccinate a large number of people -- but the supply isn't coming fast enough.

Jackson Health System had ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** appointments available again early Monday. Slots were gone in 16 minutes.

CVS Health says its vaccinated nearly 8,000 skilled nursing facilities across the country, with second doses expected to be completed within four weeks. The company says it also expects to administer first doses to residents in more than 40,000 longer-term care facilities in the U.S. by mid-February.

For the second year in a row, citing ***COVID***-19 concerns, organizers for the popular DJ techno fest Ultra Music Festival have pulled the plug on the Bayfront Park event that would have happened in March in downtown Miami.

New state data on vaccinations by ZIP Codes map out a familiar pattern for the coronavirus pandemic. Just as low-income neighborhoods tended to get hit harder by ***COVID***-19 spread, wealthier Miami-Dade neighborhoods like Fisher Island are getting their shots at a faster rate.

As Florida struggles to meet demand for ***COVID***-19 vaccinations while grappling with a slowdown in federal ***vaccine*** supplies, state records show more than 40,000 people are overdue for their second dose. The data was stripped from Florida's daily vaccination report last week to avoid confusion with federal guidance that gives people more flexibility on when they need to receive their second dose, according to the Florida Division of Emergency Management. While this means the 44,470 people Florida labeled as "overdue" are still eligible to get their booster shot, the data also shows that there's an issue with the ***vaccine*** rollout, said Dr. Amesh Adalja, a senior scholar at the Center for Health Security at Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health.

President Joe Biden has issued a blizzard of executive orders aimed at curbing the virus' spread, many of which originated in his coronavirus campaign plan. Florida has already started some of Biden's proposals, including having a strategy to reopen schools and offer more ***COVID***-19 testing. In Florida, schools have been opened for months for in-person and online learning. ***COVID***-19 testing availability also hasn't been an issue recently. Other Biden proposals include calling for more data transparency, which has been lacking in Florida.

The ***COVID***-19 vaccination site at Holiday Park in Fort Lauderdale has closed. Starting Tuesday, vaccinations will be done by appointment only at Snyder Park, 3299 SW Fourth Ave. Anyone who received their first dose at Holiday Park must go to Snyder Park on the date written on their appointment card for their second dose.

With demand sky-high for ***COVID***-19 vaccines, Miami-Dade commissioners were handed a coveted batch of appointments to fill as they see fit. The announcement brought pushback from some commissioners. Others said the plan made sense, given the apparent racial and income gaps when it comes to neighborhoods that are lagging in vaccination rates.

After two of Miami-Dade County's largest hospitals canceled thousands of ***COVID***-19 vaccination appointments due to lack of supply, Miami-Dade Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** signed an emergency order that she says will give the county more control over the vaccination process by ending hospital overbooking.

Who can get ***COVID***-19 vaccines in Florida and who cannot? Do you need proof of residency?

Florida is giving vaccines to healthcare workers, long-term care facility residents and staff, and people 65 and older. Hospitals can also choose to give the ***vaccine*** to people with health conditions that make them "at risk" of falling seriously ill with the disease.

There is now a statewide residency requirement in place. This means if you live in Miami-Dade, you can get the ***vaccine*** in Broward or vice versa. Anyone who lives in another state or country can no longer get the ***vaccine*** in Florida. Non-residents who have already received the ***vaccine*** in Florida will still be able to get the second dose.

The change was made to curb ***vaccine*** tourism, or people who travel from another state or country to get the ***vaccine*** in Miami or another part of the state.

Who should not get a ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine***: People who have had a severe allergic reaction to ingredients in the ***vaccine*** or had a severe reaction after a previous dose. Ingredients of the Pfizer-BioNTech and the Moderna vaccines can be found on FDA.gov.

How many people have received the ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** in Florida?

According to the state's Sunday ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** report, 1,224,188 people have received the first dose of the ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** in Florida and 155,314 people have completed the series of two doses of either Pfizer or Moderna vaccines.

Of those who completed the two dose vaccination, 23,514 were Miami-Dade residents, 17,547 were Broward residents and 323 were Monroe residents.

What ***COVID***-19 vaccines are available in Florida? How many doses do I need?

Florida has two vaccines available: Pfizer BioNTech and Moderna.

The Pfizer-BioNTech ***vaccine*** requires two shots, three weeks apart, and can be given to people 16 and older. Moderna's ***vaccine*** requires two shots, one month apart, and can be given to people 18 and older. Neither ***vaccine*** will give you ***COVID***-19.

The two vaccines are not interchangeable, however, which means that if your first shot was the Pfizer ***vaccine***, your second shot cannot be the Moderna ***vaccine***, according to the CDC.

Here's what you can expect at your ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** appointmentHere's what to expect at the vaccination process if you got an appointment to get your ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine***.

***COVID***-19 vaccination sites in South Florida?

MIA\_100VaccineTropPark09NEWLong lines of cars wait as people with appointments get the ***COVID vaccine*** at Tropical Park test site on Saturday, Jan. 9, 2021. The Florida Highway Patrol and Miami-Dade Police urged drivers to avoid a portion of Bird Road because large crowds hoping to get the ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** at the park led to traffic jams. Coronavirus numbers are surging in Miami-Dade County.

Publix has vaccines available in select Florida counties. South Florida, which has been hit hardest during the pandemic, is not among the locations. That might change in the future. Walgreens, CVS, Winn-Dixie, Walmart and other pharmacies will also eventually have vaccines in stock.

For now, here are your options in South Florida:

Miami-Dade County:

The county has a website, miamidade.gov/***vaccine***, where it posts updates on where seniors, and eventually the rest of the general public, will be able to find and schedule ***COVID***-19 vaccination appointments.

The county schedules appointments through the website for vaccination sites including Zoo Miami and Tropical Park.

At the moment, here are the places offering vaccines:

Mount Sinai Medical Center in Miami Beach is no longer booking appointments and has canceled all first-dose appointments for Jan. 23 and later because of supply constraints. Second-dose appointments are not affected. To check for updates, visit msmc.com/coronavirus-update/

Jackson Health System, the county's public hospital network, has launched an online portal for people 65 and older to schedule ***vaccine*** appointments. To check for available appointments, visit [*https://jhsmiami.org/comvac/*](https://jhsmiami.org/comvac/).

IMG\_9736.JPGSeniors lined up outside of Jackson Health System's Christine E. Lynn Rehabilitation Center on Wednesday, Jan. 21, to get the ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine***. The hospital system is doing vaccinations by appointment only.

Hard Rock Stadium in Miami Gardens is providing vaccinations by appointment to seniors and front-line healthcare workers. Appointments filled up quickly. Call 888-499-0840 or the TTY line at 888-256-8918 and if appointments are full, you can sign up for an update on when slots are open again.

Marlins Park in Miami, a popular ***COVID***-19 testing site, also has vaccines. For now, there is no municipal residency requirement, which means you do not need to live within the city limits to be vaccinated. Miami Mayor Francis Suarez wants to change that. For now, you just need to show proof of Florida residency. To schedule an appointment, call 888-499-0840. The number for the hearing impaired is 888-256-8918.

Baptist Health, one of the county's largest private hospitals, is no longer booking appointments and has canceled all first-dose appointments from Jan. 20 and beyond because of supply constraints. Second dose appointments are not affected. To check for updates, visit Baptisthealth.net/***vaccine***.

Seniors 65 and older who seek care with Leon Medical Centers can call customer service at 305-642-5366 to schedule a free ***COVID***-19 vaccination appointment. If you need transportation, let the operator know so they can also schedule a driver to pick you up. Appointments will be scheduled until Leon runs out of vaccines.

Pasteur and Wellmax Medical Centers are hoping to offer ***COVID***-19 vaccines soon to seniors, including non-members. Both clinics are still waiting to receive vaccines.

Florida International University has applied to be a vaccination site. The university also received Moderna doses to vaccinate FIU faculty and staff 65 and older as well as FIU healthcare workers who have direct contact with patients.

Miami-Dade County has begun contacting homebound seniors age 65 and older who live in county facilities or receive county services to offer vaccination appointments.

Miami Beach has begun administering ***COVID***-19 vaccines to some seniors living in affordable housing or who are confined to their homes.

MIA\_Seniors\_***Vaccine***\_MJO\_1Antonio Castro receives the Pfizer-BioNTech ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** from Walgreens Pharmacy Intern Erika Blanco, 24, at The Palace Renaissance & Royale, an assisted living facility in Kendall, on Wednesday, January 13, 2021. Vaccines were available Wednesday for The Palace residents and staff.

Broward County:

Broward Health, the hospital network, has filled all of its vaccination appointments through February. However, it is working to schedule appointments at Fort Lauderdale's Inter Miami CF Stadium. More on that below:

Fort Lauderdale's Inter Miami CF Stadium is now a ***COVID***-19 vaccination site. Seniors 65 and older, office staff of Broward Health-credentialed physicians and other healthcare providers and their office staff can request an appointment online at BrowardHealth.org and a Broward Health scheduler will then respond to finish the appointment booking.

Memorial Healthcare System ran out of ***COVID***-19 vaccines again. Once doses are available again, appointments can be made through the MyChart portal, [*https://mychart.mhs.net*](https://mychart.mhs.net) for current Memorial Healthcare patients. Others will have to call 954-276-4340.

Miami flash briefing player embed

The appointment-only ***vaccine*** locations listed in the website above are:

The Memorial Regional Conference Center, 3501 Johnson St. in Hollywood, noon to 7:30 p.m. Mondays, 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Tuesday through Friday.

Memorial Specialty Pharmacy, 9581 Premier Pkwy. in Miramar, 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Monday through Saturday.

The Florida Department of Health in Broward County has changed its scheduling process. Instead of requesting an appointment online, front-line healthcare workers and seniors 65 and older can now call 866-201-6313. The number for the hearing impaired is 833-476-1526.

Appointments are available at the numbers above for the following locations:

Tradewinds Park, 3600 W. Sample Rd., Coconut Creek

Vista View Park, 4001 SW 142nd Ave., Davie

Markham Park & Target Range, 16001 W. State Road 84 in Sunrise

Snyder Park, 3299 SW Fourth Ave., is set to open Tuesday.

Central Broward Park and Broward County Stadium, 3700 NW 11th Pl. in Lauderhill.

Coral Square Mall in Coral Springs.

All Cleveland Clinic Florida locations, including its Weston campus, have run out of vaccination appointments for now. Cleveland Clinic said it will resume scheduling appointments through its website for current patients once it gets more doses. To check for slots, visit [*https://my.clevelandclinic.org/landing/****covid****-19-****vaccine****/florida*](https://my.clevelandclinic.org/landing/covid-19-vaccine/florida)

Monroe County:

Callahan ***COVID*** Shot.jpgThe Florida State Department of Health's Amy Grimm vaccinates Monroe County Fire Rescue Chief Jim Callahan.

There is a delay in the Florida Department of Health in Monroe County's website and call center for ***vaccine*** registration. Officials earlier this month said it was because of the state's "unanticipated lag" in delivering additional ***COVID***-19 vaccines to the Keys.

So far, the doses the health department received prior to the delivery lag have been used to vaccinate healthcare workers and people 65 and older with special needs by appointment-only. People in long-term facilities and nursing homes in Monroe are also being vaccinated by CVS and Walgreens.

For seniors in the general population, it's still a waiting game on when they'll be able to schedule their vaccination appointment.

However, you can try your luck at the Publix stores in Islamorada and Key West. For availability, check publix.com/***covid-vaccine***/florida

**Load-Date:** January 26, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Florida, Miami-Dade vaccination process is a mess. It desperately needs a shot in the arm, too | Editorial*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:61V7-WBD1-DYJM-M4SK-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

January 24, 2021 Sunday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** editorials

**Length:** 717 words

**Byline:**  the Miami Herald Board

Miami Herald

**Body**

Although we had months to prepare, vaccinating South Floridians against ***COVID***-19 has proven harder than anyone expected. Too much of the process is in tatters. The roll-out, in Florida and across the country, torturous.

In South Florida, vaccines are flowing to wealthy Fisher Island, but not to Black communities. Hospitals have funneled precious shots to their benefactors, then overbooked appointments for everyday people and abruptly crushed the hopes of seniors so vulnerable to the disease and so desperate for the ***vaccine***. Insiders whisper in friends' ears: "Pssst, we've got some open slots over here . . ." It shouldn't be this way.

It's not simple; we get it. We need President Biden's help, and meanwhile, Gov. DeSantis also holds many of the keys to our fate. But we can, and must, do better than this scramble-here, scramble-there vaccination system -- as inefficient as it is cruel.

"The process has become a cross between the reality show "Survivor" and a toddler soccer game," Miami Beach Mayor Dan Gelber told the Editorial Board. If it weren't so tragic, it might be funny -- barely.

At 68,000 vaccinations a day, Florida already is exceeding daily goals that the state would have to meet under President Biden's plan to get 100 million people vaccinated during his first 100 days in office. But the lack of a reliable supply of the ***vaccine*** flowing from the federal government has set off the helter-skelter process.

Having money helps

In Florida and across the country, there have been long vaccination lines -- and people who jump to the head of them.

A Miami Herald front-page article on Sunday reveals that if you live in a ritzy Zip code -- say, Fisher Island or Aventura -- you are more likely to have already landed a dose of the precious ***vaccine***. Somehow, that is not surprising, but it is not acceptable, either. ***COVID***-19 has hit poor communities hard.

Local mayors are trying to fill the leadership void left by the state, which in turn is trying to fill the void left by the Trump administration.

A frustrated Miami-Dade Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** signed an emergency order Friday that she hopes will give the county more control over the vaccination process by ending hospital overbooking, which has emerged as a major stumbling block.

Her move came after two of Miami-Dade's largest hospitals canceled thousands of first-dose vaccination appointments because of the lack of supply or fear they could not meet the second-dose requirement. It's a frightening turn of events for those who fought their way through the muck to get an appointment.

Offer of vaccines

Hospitals were initially entrusted to handle the ***vaccine*** distribution to senior citizens within the general public. It made sense. Those facilities have the personnel and the know-how. But their systems are proving faulty. And some hospitals have been accused of cronyism with donors and wealthy benefactors.

Carlos Migoya, Jackson Health System's CEO, made a controversial offer -- to give each of the 13 commissioners, 100 vaccination appointments to use as they pleased, with the mayor's office getting an unknown number. Well intended, but it caused a stir during commissioners' video meeting last week.

Wisely recognizing that accepting the offer would smack of favoritism, most commissioners publicly turned it down, although a Jackson spokesman countered the appointments were meant to reach underserved residents in communities commissioners represent.

Release supply

Levine Cava told the Editorial Board that she prefers a different tack in partnering with Jackson: "I was working with Jackson to expand access by working with community groups." Indeed, no elected official should personally get involved in selecting people to get the ***vaccine***.

Miami Beach Mayor Dan Gelber wants more grassroots help.

"Municipalities can help, but so can houses of worship and other organizations that tend to know who the most vulnerable are," Gelber told the Board.

Within the city of Miami, Mayor Francis Suarez told the Editorial Board, "All we need is more vaccines. It's that simple. Just give us more vaccines and we'll find the people to administer it."

This is a legitimate plea that backs up the governor's call for more ***vaccine***. This is a promise that the president, by pushing manufacturers Moderna and Pfizer, must fulfill.

**Load-Date:** January 24, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Miami-Dade commissioners handed 1,300 vaccine slots to fill by county hospital*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:61V0-JM31-JC3J-X34V-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

January 22, 2021 Friday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** miami\_dade

**Length:** 898 words

**Byline:**  Douglas Hanks

Miami Herald

**Body**

With demand sky-high for ***COVID***-19 vaccines, Miami-Dade commissioners on Friday were handed a coveted batch of appointments to fill as they see fit.

The head of Jackson Health, the county hospital that commissioners help oversee, announced the distribution plan, saying each commissioner's chief of staff would receive a form with 100 ***vaccine*** slots to fill. Jackson CEO Carlos Migoya said appointments must go to people 65 or over who can prove they live in Florida.

"You'll have a spreadsheet in which you'll be able to provide us the names and numbers of the people" who get the appointments, Migoya said during a meeting with commissioners. He described the plan as a way to reach residents who haven't been able to get appointments through the largely online process that's already underway.

"It may not be enough," Migoya said of 1,300 appointments reserved for the 13-seat commission, which has control over some county funding for the hospital. "Or it may be too much. We're going to try it. If this works, we'll do it again. Obviously subject to getting more ***vaccine***."

leib tweet

The announcement brought pushback from some commissioners.

"This worries me," Commissioner Eileen Higgins said. Higgins, who represents Little Havana and parts of Miami Beach, said she questioned why commissioners should be put in charge of deciding who gets access to limited supplies of vaccines. "It worries me now there's another 13 phone numbers and addresses people have in order to access vaccines. People are confused enough."

Others said the plan made sense, given the apparent racial and income gaps when it comes to neighborhoods that are lagging in vaccination rates. Commissioner Jean Monestime, whose district includes North Miami, said his office is a frequent source of calls from people who are falling through the cracks of government services.

"To many people in the community, we are the ones they access," he said. "It's our offices they know."

After some public criticism unfolded during the meeting -- Bal Harbour Mayor Gabriel Groisman called it a "bad idea" on Twitter, saying there are "plenty of non-profits" that could fill the appointments -- the commission's chairman said he would decline the appointments.

"I appreciate you doing this," said Chairman Jose "Pepe" Diaz, whose district includes the Doral area. "Other people, unfortunately, will look at this and [say] we're trying to make it political. ... You can hold off on my 100 and use them as needed for the people coming in. That's just me."

Higgins' office also said she would be declining the vaccination slots, and Commissioner Javier Souto said he also didn't want them. Commissioner Danielle Cohen Higgins also put out a statement saying her office would decline the appointments. Commissioner Raquel Regalado released a statement saying "returning this allotment is difficult" but that she would decline the "well-intentioned" offer.

Lidia Amoretti, spokesperson for Jackson, said the idea behind the offer was to tap into commission contacts with pockets of the community needing help. "We understand elected officials often have specialized knowledge of the unique, hard-to-reach populations in their districts, so we wanted to give them that opportunity to help those people," she said.

Commissioner Rebeca Sosa called it a no-win situation. "If we say no, our constituents will get mad. If we say yes, everybody is going to get mad and say, 'You're trying to take advantage of this situation to benefit your friends,' " Sosa said, also declining the appointment slots. "The more we do, the more criticized we are."

At the start of the online video meeting, Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** previewed Migoya's announcement about the ***vaccine*** appointment slots, which included an unknown number available to the mayor's office.

"I'm happy to share we'll be partnering to make additional appointments available ... in partnership with your offices and Jackson, which Carlos Migoya will tell you about in a little more detail shortly," she said. "We will go deeper into under-served communities and provide vaccines to those who are harder to reach."

On Friday, Rachel Johnson, Levine Cava's spokeswoman, did not say how many ***vaccine*** appointments Jackson provided the mayor's office. She said the office "would be working directly with community organizations" to fill appointments provided by Jackson.

Johnson said the mayor wasn't aware of Migoya's ***vaccine***-appointment offer until just ahead of the meeting. Levine Cava "got a call 20 minutes before the meeting" about the Jackson appointments, Johnson said. She also pointed to remarks Levine Cava made in the meeting linking the Jackson effort to outreach to "communities at great risk."

On Sunday, Jackson's media office said the hospital system allocated 1,300 appointments to the Levine Cava administration, on top of the original 1,300 offered commissioners. Those allocations were given to the county's Emergency Management office, according to Jackson. Johnson confirmed the allocation and said the agency would work an existing network of non-profits to fill the appointments.

New ***COVID***-19 mobile vaccination program launched in Little HavanaCommissioner Joe Carollo, Mayor Francis Suarez, Congresswoman María Elvira Salazar and Senator Ileana García attended the launch of a mobile vaccination program that will serve senior communities in the city of Miami.

**Load-Date:** January 24, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*After 'unacceptable' vaccine cancellations, Miami-Dade mayor orders end to overbooking*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:61V0-JM31-JC3J-X345-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

January 22, 2021 Friday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** coronavirus

**Length:** 905 words

**Byline:**  Samantha J. Gross and Douglas Hanks

Miami Herald

**Body**

After two of Miami-Dade County's largest hospitals canceled thousands of ***COVID***-19 vaccination appointments due to lack of supply, Miami-Dade Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** signed an emergency order Friday that she says will give the county more control over the vaccination process by ending hospital overbooking.

The order comes a day after Miami Beach's Mount Sinai Medical Center called off all first-dose ***vaccine*** appointments citing lack of supply, a move Baptist Health made earlier this week when it also canceled future appointments.

Levine Cava called the actions on the part of the hospitals "unfair and unacceptable."

She added that Miami-Dade County honored all vaccination slots made at county sites, now shut down for lack of supply from the state.

"You all know that there were significant supply issues, and the cancellation of appointments at Mount Sinai and Baptist," she told county commissioners Friday during an online briefing on ***COVID***-19. "And this is not acceptable. It cannot happen. Too many people in our community are desperate for the ***vaccine***, and trying to get appointments. To be abruptly canceled after they got them is unfair and unacceptable."

Carlos Migoya, CEO of the county-owned Jackson Health hospital system, which continues receiving doses from Florida, told commissioners Jackson has honored all of its vaccination slots.

"We have never -- I repeat, never -- set up an appointment that we have not either had doses for on hand, or committed doses that were coming in the door," he said.

Under the mayor's three-page order, which goes into effect Saturday, hospital systems and local governments administering the ***vaccine*** will now be required to publish daily updates on their progress, including the total number of vaccines on hand from the day before, the sites where vaccines were being administered and the number of doses that had to be discarded at the end of the day.

The order also states that those providing vaccines should not book appointments unless they have already received enough ***vaccine*** doses. It does not include any punishment for overbooking appointments, though.

01.22.21 Emergency Order 32-20.pdf

Hospitals will also be expected to send a weekly breakdown to the county of the age, gender and race of those vaccinated and the ZIP Code of each person's residence.

"This order is meant to ensure that no community is left behind and all residents 65+ have equal access to this lifesaving ***vaccine***," Levine Cava tweeted Friday. "And I am urgently advocating for more vaccines because the supply we currently have is not nearly enough to meet the enormous demand."

A Baptist Health spokeswoman did not return requests for comment on the order. Mount Sinai Medical Center spokeswoman Tara Mcnamara declined an interview.

The cancellations that spurred the county's order come as top state health officials acknowledged that Florida is in a "supply-limited situation."

To date, Florida has vaccinated 1,249,804 people. About 143,257 of those were in Miami-Dade.

According to the News Service of Florida, Surgeon General Scott Rivkees told hospital officials Tuesday that he does not know when additional first doses of the Pfizer-BioNtech or Moderna vaccines will be sent to the state or how many doses would be in a future shipment.

"At the present time, we are in pretty much a supply-limited situation," Rivkees said on the conference call. "So, as more ***vaccine*** becomes available, we will be able to determine when we can send more vaccines out to hospitals for community vaccination."

At a press conference in Key Largo Friday, Gov. Ron DeSantis said some sites like Hard Rock Stadium have the capability of administering twice as many vaccinations a day as they are now, but are hampered by lack of supply. He said this week the state had hoped to get "plussed up," meaning the state would be placed into a category by the federal government to increase the supply, but instead, Florida is receiving the same 266,000 doses it received last week.

"We hope we get plussed up in the near future," he said. "We stand ready, willing and able to handle it. We are hoping we are able to get more."

Division of Emergency Management Director Jared Moskowitz, who oversees ***vaccine*** distribution for the state, told the Miami Herald earlier this week that the federal ***vaccine*** allotments for each week are only given to states with six days' notice, which also makes it hard to plan distribution.

It also leaves hospitals scrambling to schedule highly sought-after ***vaccine*** appointments. In the case of Baptist and Mount Sinai, appointments were booked as far in advance as early March, leaving a gap in doses and forcing cancellations.

Mary Mayhew, CEO of the Florida Hospital Association and the former secretary of the Agency for Health Care Administration under DeSantis, said Florida's hospitals have been told they are not likely to receive more first-dose vaccines as the state maximizes the role of retail pharmacies including Publix, and prioritizes government-run sites.

"At this point, the state has moved to prioritize a county-based approach, using their county health departments, and maximizing the role of retail pharmacies such as those in Publix, CVS and Walgreens," Mayhew told the Herald Wednesday. "Hospitals are actually rolling back those operations."

Moskowitz tweeted Friday morning, however, that when the state gets more ***vaccine*** "hospitals are still part of the plan."

**Load-Date:** January 23, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Miami-Dade's wealthiest ZIP codes are also the most vaccinated for COVID-19, data shows*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:61V0-JM31-JC3J-X33G-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

January 22, 2021 Friday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** coronavirus

**Length:** 1435 words

**Byline:**  Douglas Hanks and Ben Conarck

Miami Herald

**Body**

Florida's strained vaccination process hasn't been so bad on oceanfront Fisher Island, where half of the residents have gotten their shots.

Not so in Opa-locka, where about 40% of the population lives in poverty and only 2% of the population have received vaccinations for ***COVID***-19.

New state data on vaccinations by ZIP codes map out a familiar pattern for the coronavirus pandemic. Just as low-income neighborhoods tended to get hit harder by ***COVID***-19 spread, wealthier neighborhoods are getting their shots at a faster rate.

Fisher Island's ZIP code of 33109 easily leads the county in vaccination rates, with 51% of the enclave's 400 inhabitants vaccinated, according to a Miami Herald analysis pairing ***vaccine*** data from the state's SHOTS registry with population numbers from the U.S. Census.

Only a few neighborhoods have vaccination rates above 10%, and each of them are among the county's top 20 wealthiest ZIP codes. Those include 33158, home of the posh Deering Bay neighborhood, with a vaccination rate of 14%, and the luxe condos of Aventura's 33180 ZIP code, where the rate is 13%.

Age does play a factor for Fisher Island's ***vaccine*** share in a state where doses are largely reserved for people 65 and over. Census data show the 33109 ZIP code has the highest share of people in that age range in Miami-Dade. But age doesn't appear to be driving the trend.

North Miami's 33167 ZIP code ranks 11th in terms of households with people 65 and over, and has the county's 76th worst vaccination rate: 1.5%. Deering Bay's 33158 ZIP doesn't fall in the top 20 list for households with people 65 and over, but has the fourth highest vaccination rate in Miami-Dade.

"We are continuing to have every single effort that we're moving forward with operate along lines of inequity," said Zinzi Bailey, a research professor at the University of Miami who studies health inequities.

Bailey recalled how Fisher Island, with its University of Miami Health System outpost, was able to secure ***COVID***-19 tests for every one of its residents in mid-April through the institution. Meanwhile, lower-income areas with more essential worker had no access to testing until months later.

"We have learned nothing through this crisis," Bailey said.

Miami-Dade released the data Friday as the administration of Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** announced new efforts to expand vaccination efforts beyond a system that largely favors the affluent: Online reservations for vaccinations can surface at a moment's notice, favoring people not burdened by shift work or people with family who have free time to help. People with cars can select vaccination options across Miami-Dade.

Some of the county's poorest ZIP codes have the lowest vaccination rates. Of the three ZIP codes in Opa-locka, 33054 sits at the bottom with vaccination rates. The area has a Census population of 31,797 people and state Health Department figures list 431 vaccinations there -- a rate of 1.4%. The ZIP code also ranks fourth from last in terms of median income in Miami-Dade, with the average person receiving just $27,000 a year. By contrast, the median income at Fisher Island is about $200,000.

Why are Miami-Dade, Broward vaccinating Black residents at slower rate than white residents?

The added detail of vaccination by ZIP code came on the heels of the state releasing demographic information by county -- showing that just 6% of the 138,000 people who received a ***COVID vaccine*** in Miami-Dade are Black in a county with a 17% Black population.

Inequities have been worsened in part, Bailey said, by state policies that skipped over essential workers, who often are low-income and disproportionately people of color, in favor of senior citizens. County and state officials then set up vaccination campaigns for seniors that favored those who are able to access digital sign-up sheets and follow social media closely for alerts of new appointments available.

"The lawlessness around all of this and everything being left up to chance is where we systematically put inequity into the system," Bailey said. "We've incorporated it within."

That falls well short of what public health experts say will need to be a concerted effort to overcome deeply rooted mistrust in the ***COVID*** vaccines in majority-Black neighborhoods.

The ZIP codes being left behind in that lawlessness are those hardest hit by ***COVID***, said Alexandre White, a Johns Hopkins University assistant professor of sociology and the history of medicine. Though there are logistical challenges that make it harder to get the vaccines to areas with less healthcare access, White said that is just more reason to develop coherent plans to address them.

The situation playing out in Florida, White said, spoke to a "lack of coordinated planning."

"If you focus on speed, those who are most easily accessible will be the ones who receive the most care, and those who have been most historically isolated from healthcare access ... will be the ones most likely to suffer without ***vaccine*** coverage," he said.

Levine Cava said the county was planning to open a reservations phone line once Florida supplies its vaccination sites with more doses. The state already offers phone lines for the two Miami-Dade sites its emergency division oversees: Hard Rock Stadium and Marlins Park. (The number: 1-888-499-0840.)

At the county-owned Jackson Health system, CEO Carlos Migoya said the hospital network plans to open up telephones for reservations. "We know online booking isn't the best solution for everyone in our county," he said.

The county also has been arranging mobile vaccination efforts in public housing complexes. Separately, Florida state officials, partnering with the Jackson Health system, are reserving some vaccination appointments for churches, temples and mosques to reach people who either can't access vaccines or aren't enthusiastic about getting them.

"We will go deeper into underserved communities," Levine Cava said.

Florida ***vaccine*** residency rule may block access for migrant farmworkers

Eileen Higgins, a county commissioner representing Little Havana and parts of Miami Beach, said the ZIP code analysis shows the same kind of prosperity gaps seen on testing availability. "Some of the ZIP codes where we see shots in arms have very high incomes," she said during a Friday meeting of commissioners with Migoya and Levine Cava. "We need to make sure... we're not just looking at race, but we're also looking at income."

Like Bailey, the UM professor, Melissa Ward-Peterson, a social epidemiologist at Florida International University, cited deeply rooted mistrust in majority-Black neighborhoods in Miami-Dade County as a barrier that demands more planning than state and county officials have mustered thus far.

"It seems like a very disorganized effort, unfortunately, which I don't think is necessarily the fault of Miami-Dade County," said Ward, who studied disparities in healthcare and has worked on HIV. "There's a lot of spillover effects happening from the federal level down to the state level and to the county level, but this is what happens when you don't take health equity into account during the planning process."

Ward-Peterson said that planning should have started six or nine months ago, when officials first knew vaccines were in the pipeline.

"I think the can keeps getting kicked down the road, and we can't keep kicking it down the road because the disparities are only going to keep growing as the vaccines become more available," she said. "It's going to catch up to us eventually."

The signs of ***vaccine*** hesitancy in those communities officials want to reach are not hard to find.

MIA\_0014churchvaccination012221Shirley Kemp of New Beginning Missionary Baptist Church receives her vaccination shot on Friday, January 22, 2021. Jackson Health System has partnered with nearly 55 churches, synagogues and mosques in Miami-Dade County with the goal of reaching people who are age 65 and older in underserved communities.

Shirley Kemp, 71, said it took a lot of thought before she reached the decision to get vaccinated at the North Dade Health Center in Opa-locka -- becoming part of a tiny percentage of Black people in her community who got the shot. Kemp was invited by her church, New Beginnings Missionary Baptist Church, which partnered with Jackson Health System to schedule appointments for members and their families.

"I have a lot of things going on with myself and I was scared for that," said Kemp, who lives in Opa-locka. "But I had to realize that things happen for a reason. We are here to get this shot."

Miami Herald reporter Samantha J. Gross contributed to this story.

**Load-Date:** January 23, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Florida now requiring proof of state residency for COVID vaccines*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:61TR-Y4D1-JC3J-X521-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

January 21, 2021 Thursday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** coronavirus

**Length:** 563 words

**Byline:**  Ana Claudia Chacin, Bianca Padró Ocasio and Taylor Dolven

Miami Herald

**Body**

Anyone who wants to receive a ***vaccine*** against ***COVID***-19 in Florida must prove they are a resident of the state, according to a new emergency public health declaration signed Thursday by Florida Surgeon General Scott Rivkees.

In the advisory, Rivkees said the "prioritization of Floridians for ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** in Florida" is "necessary to protect public health and safety," as a result of limited ***vaccine*** availability in the state. The advisory would apply to "every ***vaccine*** provider," the advisory said.

The only cited exception to the new residency mandate are healthcare workers who are working directly with patients. Nonresidents who received the first dose will be able to receive their second dose in Florida, according to a Florida Department of Health spokesperson.

The new statewide advisory is a change in direction for several local health leaders, who reinforced earlier this month that they would not deny anyone a ***vaccine*** if they could prove they were over 65.

It follows similar requirements from other Florida counties, where patients must show a valid Florida driver's license or photo identification, a utility bill with a Florida address and the patient's name, or, in the case of "snowbirds," a part-time rental agreement.

State law gives law enforcement the authority to enforce the advisory and leaves it up to county public health officials to establish the procedures for implementing the advisory.

Florida's new ***vaccine*** requirements come after several news outlets, including the Miami Herald, documented several cases of "***vaccine*** tourism," or the practice of traveling to Florida from another country or state just for the purpose of receiving the ***vaccine***.

While Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis has previously said he approves of "snowbirds" receiving the ***vaccine***, he has said he opposes "***vaccine*** tourism" and signaled he would curb the practice. So far, at least four counties are now requiring proof of Florida residency, including Manatee, Volusia, Seminole and Sarasota counties.

Miami-Dade County Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** said in a statement that the state's guidelines were just reinforcing "what has already been our priority in Miami-Dade: To put shots in the arms of those who live in Miami-Dade County as quickly as possible."

She added that the demand was "enormous" and they were working to get shots quickly to Miami-Dade residents.

"We need more vaccines and we need them now," the mayor said.

Last week, Jackson Health System, the state's largest hospital system, said it would require proof that ***vaccine*** patients live in the U.S. -- an effort to deter tourists from signing up for vaccination appointments.

After Thursday's announcement from the state, a spokesperson for Jackson said the hospital system will require patients to present a Florida ID in keeping with the new requirement. If a patient doesn't have a Florida ID, they must bring two documents that prove they reside in Florida, such as a utility bill, lease agreement, or property-tax statement. Patients who have already received their first shot will not be required to prove Florida residency for their second shot.

"Our focus remains on preventing the spread of ***COVID***-19 by vaccinating as many people who live in our community, and at the same time not create roadblocks to those who have limited access to extensive documentation," spokesperson Lidia Amoretti said in a statement.

**Load-Date:** January 22, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Why are Miami-Dade, Broward vaccinating Black residents at slower rate than white residents?*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:61TR-Y4D1-JC3J-X522-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

January 21, 2021 Thursday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** coronavirus

**Length:** 1227 words

**Byline:**  Ben Conarck and Douglas Hanks

Miami Herald

**Body**

The relief of seeing his father and uncle get their ***COVID***-19 vaccines came with some discouraging news for Dr. Hansel Tookes. Both men were upset at how few fellow Black people were getting their shots.

"My dad was despondent over this, asking me, 'What are you doing about this?', knowing that it's the kind of thing that keeps me up at night," said Tookes, a University of Miami physician and professor who has pioneered health equity in the city.

Statistics released this week by Florida's ***COVID*** operation show the Tookes family experienced a fairly typical day in a ***vaccine*** operation that has steadily left Black residents behind.

Of the roughly 138,000 people who have gotten the vaccines in Miami-Dade, just 8,265 -- or 6% -- identified as Black, according to the latest state data, released Thursday. Excluding the 19,200 or so people who were marked as "unknown" race, that's still just 7% of the total, compared to the overall portion of Miami-Dade that is black -- 16.7%, according to U.S. Census data.

Stark racial disparities in ***vaccine*** distribution appear to be a problem in neighboring Broward County, too. Though the county is 30% Black, just 10% of the 95,618 people who received vaccines and marked down a race identified as Black.

Local healthcare leaders had already warned of a racial gap in the early days of Miami-Dade's vaccination effort. Jackson CEO Carlos Migoya told county commissioners last week that the system was not working for the county's Black communities.

"What we found is we have not, through the normal appointment process, have not been getting enough people of color. Principally Black. Because we have gotten a fair amount of Hispanics," Migoya said.

Migoya said about 2,000 people received vaccinations in the first wave of appointments made through churches, with a "very large" chunk of the doses going to Black residents. Jackson also started allowing employees at the hospital, one of Miami-Dade's largest employers, to offer vaccination appointments to up to two relatives ages 65 and over in an effort to reach people not getting the chance for appointments through the online portal.

On Sunday, a state vaccination operation was set up at the Second Baptist Church in South Miami-Dade to vaccinate 600 people in an effort Commissioner Kionne McGhee said he helped arrange with Florida's Emergency Management Division.

Commissioner Keon Hardemon, who represents some Miami neighborhoods with large Black populations, said the church outreach won't be enough.

"There are a great number of people in this community that do not attend church," he said. "We have to find other ways to reach the Black community."

The lack of access for Black people comes even though the Black population, especially older Black men, are known to suffer disproportionately high death rates from ***COVID***.

In Miami-Dade, 2.9% of Black residents with ***COVID*** have died of the disease, according to the health department, compared to a death rate of 1.8% for whites. In Broward, 1.89% of Black residents with ***COVID*** have died of the disease compared to 1.3% for whites. But the hospitalization rate has been nearly twice as high for Black residents diagnosed with ***COVID*** -- 8.7% of all cases -- than it has been for white residents, about 4.4% of all cases.

Companies developing vaccines face decades of mistrust from within the Black communityAs minority communities are recruited for coronavirus ***vaccine*** trials, companies are battling decades of mistrust in ***vaccine*** safety. Local leaders are encouraging greater engagement efforts to help fight the pandemic in the future.

Much of the current vaccination process favors people with easy access to the internet and the time to pounce on reservation windows that often begin midday and can last less than 30 minutes before vaccination slots are filled online. For the county's ***vaccine*** supply, the administration of Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** will sometimes rely on the mayor's Twitter feed to announce the reopening of the reservation site for small batches of appointments -- a kind of pop-up vaccination opportunity available only to the most media-engaged of Miami-Dade's residents.

Barry Bloom, an infectious disease expert at Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, described that system of alerting ***vaccine*** availability on social media channels as "mind boggling" and not grounded in any public health principles.

"It's absolutely biased against low-income vulnerable populations," Bloom said. "It's a guaranteed intrinsic bias."

On Thursday, Levine Cava noted the county has also sent mobile vaccination operations to provide shots to residents of public housing who are 65 and older. Visiting the complexes, she said it was clear the online system for vaccination slots at drive-through locations was going to leave behind large chunks of the population.

"All the people in line I spoke to hadn't attempted to get an appointment anywhere else. They didn't have cars. They don't use the internet," she said. Levine Cava also said some vaccinations made through the county website were for state Health Department vaccination clinics in some under-served neighborhoods, including Perrine in South Miami-Dade, Little Haiti and the area around Jackson known as the Health District. "It's very valuable to go where people live."

She said the main challenge facing the county for improving vaccination rates in Black neighborhoods is the lack of supply of doses. Miami-Dade had to shut down vaccination sites this week after being told Florida wasn't sending the county government more doses. That challenge of limited supply was also amplified by a state priority on injecting as many people as possible in a short period of time.

"We were definitely told at the beginning we had to use up the supply within the week," she said. "The message wasn't: Go out and find the people that are under-served. The drive-thrus are very efficient."

Levine Cava said part of the county's outreach strategy is tapping well-known Black residents, including community leaders, pastors and others, to promote the ***vaccine*** and try to reduce skepticism among some when it comes to injections. "We certainly have the distrust, particularly in the Black community," she said. "This has to be addressed through trusted intermediaries."

Tookes started the state's first needle exchange and has a free clinic in Overtown, where he regularly cares for Black Miami residents with little healthcare access. Even with his daily interaction with the healthcare system's racial gaps, he said the ***vaccine*** disparity represented a "worst nightmare" in terms of how bad the divide could be.

He suspects the divide comes from a string of factors, starting with appointments at the sites being driven by social media alerts and online forms, but also including historical mistrust in the county's Black communities.

Even at his clinic -- an oasis of healthcare in an under-served area -- Tookes said he doesn't have access to the ***vaccine***. As recently as Wednesday, Tookes said he was answering questions about ***vaccine***, and helping clients overcome their skepticism.

"They're right on the precipice, but then they ask me: 'How do I sign up?' " Tookes said. "Right now, my answer is you have to set an alert on Twitter, then wait for the alert, then sign up, and that's not ideal."

Miami Herald Staff Writer Daniel Chang contributed to this report.

**Load-Date:** January 22, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Still need a COVID-19 vaccine? Here's how to keep track of availability*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:61TD-M4B1-DYJM-M0BF-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

January 20, 2021 Wednesday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** coronavirus

**Length:** 587 words

**Byline:**  Michelle Marchante

Miami Herald

**Body**

Booking a ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** appointment is like winning a contest on a radio show. You need luck. And you have to call, or in many cases, be online at the right time.

But there are easier ways to look for ***vaccine*** appointments.

Miami-Dade County, the Florida Department of Health in Broward County and hospitals like Jackson Health System usually post updates on Twitter about ***vaccine*** availability minutes before slots become available on their online portals.

You don't have to monitor Twitter or be online 24/7. In fact, you can get the social media platform to do half of the work for you. While we can't guarantee you'll get a ***vaccine***, the following tips should make the search easier.

Tips to find ***COVID vaccine*** appointments in South Florida

1. You and your family of ***vaccine*** hunters need Twitter accounts, if you don't have one already. It's easy and free. Visit twitter.com, click sign up and follow the on-screen instructions. Then download the Twitter app through your mobile phone or tablet's app store and login.

2. Use the Twitter search feature to find the accounts of the hospitals, county or health department you want and click "Follow." Once you are on one of the Twitter profiles, you should see a bell icon next to the word "Follow." That's the notification icon. Click it and then click "All Tweets."

IMG\_9733.PNGClick the notification icon (it looks like a bell) to be notified every time a Twitter account tweets.

Now, whenever that account tweets, including about ***vaccine*** availability, you'll get a notification. Then you can open the app, see if the tweet is about vaccines, and if it is, rush over to the website to try and book an appointment. And don't worry, you can always click the bell icon and click "None" to unsubscribe later.

You can also get Twitter notifications on desktops and laptops, but the process is slightly more complicated and depends on your browser.

Here are some of the South Florida accounts we've seen tweet about ***vaccine*** availability:

Jackson Health System Twitter: @JacksonHealth. Website to schedule appointments: jacksonhealth.org/keeping-you-safe/

Miami-Dade County Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** Twitter: @MayorDaniella. Miami-Dade County website to schedule appointments: miamidade.gov/***vaccine***.

Florida Department of Health in Broward County Twitter: @FLHealthBroward. Website to schedule appointments: browardcovidvaccine.com

Other social media and website monitoring tools

There are other online tools you can use in your quest to find available appointments though they might not be as easy to use.

Social media dashboards like TweetDeck (tweetdeck.twitter.com), for example, let you monitor multiple Twitter accounts in real-time, which is a good option for those who don't want to download an app.

If you have a techie in the family, have them look into other online tools like sken.io ([*http://sken.io/*](http://sken.io/)) which can monitor website changes and alert you to when your hospital or county health department's online portal has appointments available.

Caveats: Some of these online tools cost money, but for your purposes, look for ones that are free or offer free versions like TweetDeck. Those will be more than enough for your ***vaccine*** watch. Other online tools like sken.io offer free trials, but some might be complicated to use.

And, of course, don't download or click links on websites you don't recognize. If you're considering going this route and using a website monitoring tool, do some research online and ask the techie in your family or friends for a recommendation.

**Load-Date:** January 20, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*COVID-19 hit Blacks in Miami-Dade hard. Remove their hurdles to getting the vaccine | Editorial*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:61SS-2WW1-DYJM-M0DN-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

January 17, 2021 Sunday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** editorials

**Length:** 910 words

**Byline:**  the Miami Herald Editorial Board

Miami Herald

**Body**

When, as president, Joe Biden brings the kind of cohesive ***COVID*** guidance that has been missing -- fatally so -- for almost a year, he must include a special focus on the underserved Black, Hispanic and Native American communities that have been hit the hardest by the pandemic.

In his push to shift the raucous and chaotic national conversation Biden was wise to form a task force focused on getting residents of these vulnerable communities tested and vaccinated. The task force will be led by Marcella Nunez-Smith, a respected voice on healthcare disparities. The federal-level focus is vital, and overdue.

Americans among these populations have a ***COVID*** mortality rate up to three times that of white Americans. Many have the kinds of jobs they can't do remotely; they can't afford to quarantine if they want to play the bills; they have underlying health conditions exacerbated by the coronavirus; they are at the mercy of the digital divide -- especially seniors -- sometimes without the computers to access the deluge of vital ***COVID*** information online.

It stands to reason, unfortunately, that these same citizens are already often out of the loop and lagging behind when it comes to getting vaccinated against the coronavirus. South Florida and, in particular, Miami-Dade, follow the national pattern.

Better coordination

"There's no real organization," Dr. Cheryl Holder, a professor at the Florida International University Herbert Wertheim College of Medicine, told the Editorial Board, recently. "We need coordinated delivery, mobile units, evening sites. Hospitals are not always easily accessible."

Holder said that barely 10 percent of eligible African-American residents have been vaccinated. "If you going to expect equitable distribution, churches and schools must be involved. That how it was done with polio vaccines."

She said, "35 percent of residents in Liberty City and Little Haiti don't own cars. Many work two jobs. They can't do 8 to 5," referring to the hours that vaccinations most often are available.

"We should be working as a collaborative with community. . . . This can't be a top down from the government. This has to be the community coming together to make sure the highest-risk folks are vaccinated."

Holder cites an additional hurdle that medical professionals and community-based organizations must clear if many Black and immigrant residents are going to get vaccinated: distrust. Black Americans are schooled in the disgrace of the Tuskegee experiment, in which African-American men were intentionally infected with syphilis -- and never told -- in the name of science. Black Americans are aware of forced sterilizations of Black women in the past and biased medical professionals who, even in the 21st century, give them a lesser standard of care.

Cultural beliefs

In some immigrant communities the belief in natural remedies can run deep, bolstered by the fear that something developed in the lab, and not grown on and plucked from a tree, can't be of any use.

These are serious, legitimate concerns -- and Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava***'s administration and the County Commission are addressing them with common-sense initiatives to get information, testing and vaccinations to vulnerable, underresourced residents.

County Commissioner Kionne McGhee has just been appointed chair of the commission's Health, Emergency Management and Intergovernmental Affairs Committee. Commissioner Rene Garcia is co-chair. Subduing ***COVID*** is Priority No. 1.

"One strategy to reach the underserved will be to reach out to all the community action agencies and the community-based organizations. The goal is to empower them to inform us as to the best strategy of reaching the people they are currently serving," McGhee told the Editorial Board.

"These groups already are responsible for dealing with low-income housing and food disparities, dealing with everyone who meets that poverty threshold," he said. "The important thing is, they already have the data that they need and the population that we're trying to reach."

***Vaccine*** shortage

He cited a vaccination event for senior citizens scheduled to take place Sunday at a church in Richmond Heights, and said that more will be planned in other districts. He, along with Levine Cava, said mobile vaccination units are being deployed to public housing complexes, depending on availability of the ***vaccine***.

"There is a shortage of vaccines," McGhee said. "I'm now working with the state's emergency management director, Jared Moskowitz, to vaccinate 500 individuals from these communities, working with DeSantis."

This last is the most encouraging news out of Florida's persistent mishandling of the pandemic since March. Levine Cava, too, confirms that the DeSantis administration -- which the Editorial Board has criticized for almost a year for its missteps that not only have failed to keep people safe, but also alive -- has been responsive and accessible.

"Moskowitz has given us advance notice for vaccination sites, so we can post it [on the county's website]. He holds the cards when is comes to ***vaccine***." Levine also has been in conversation with Drs. Anthony Fauci and Deborah Birx, of the White House task force on the coronavirus.

The ***vaccine*** roll-out has been aggravating not just in Florida, but across the country. Miami-Dade leaders are right to realize that they, too, hold the cards to eradicating ***COVID*** in this community. They haven't been dealt the best hand, but they are playing it well.

**Load-Date:** January 18, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Zoo Miami is now a vaccine site. Here's how you can get a COVID shot there*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:61S4-4MS1-JC3J-X1D3-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

January 14, 2021 Thursday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** coronavirus

**Length:** 410 words

**Byline:**  Michelle Marchante and Douglas Hanks

Miami Herald

**Body**

Zoo Miami's parking lot is turning into a ***COVID***-19 vaccination site Friday, and its first -- and possibly last -- patients will be those who booked appointments through Miami-Dade County's online portal earlier this week.

The county-run drive-thru vaccination site at 12400 SW 152nd St., on the southern edge of West Kendall, is for seniors 65 and older and frontline healthcare workers. Appointments are required, but you won't be able to get one yet.

Miami-Dade Commissioner Danielle Cohen Higgins told the Miami Herald that the Zoo Miami vaccination site would first be catering to those who managed to get appointments through Miami-Dade County's online portal on Monday.

A planned pause in Florida's ***vaccine*** deliveries to Miami-Dade County's government could also cause Zoo Miami and Tropical Park, another county vaccination site, to shut down as early as next week. The state says it's because of federal supply cutbacks.

The pause will not affect Zoo Miami's booked vaccination appointments, which are scheduled through Sunday.

The news comes a day after Miami-Dade County Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** officially announced Zoo Miami's ***vaccine***-exclusive status during a news conference at Tropical Park, which also serves as a testing site.

Zoo Miami's vaccination site will be in the east parking lot to provide direct access without affecting zoo visitors, said Ron Magill, spokesman for the county-owned zoo. Visitors who are not there for the ***vaccine*** will park in the west lot.

Miami-Dade County has ***COVID***-19 vaccines. Which one do they have?

Miami-Dade County sites are using the two vaccines that are approved in the United States for emergency use during the pandemic --Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna. The one you are given will depend on availability. Both require two doses, several weeks apart.

Like at other vaccination sites, once you are injected, you will be guided to park in a waiting area for 15 minutes to make sure there are no adverse reactions to the ***vaccine***.

If you get vaccinated at Zoo Miami or another county-run site, expect to receive an email to schedule your second appointment about a week before the date listed on the vaccination card you're given after receiving the first injection. You will need to show that card to get your second injection.

And for anyone wondering, yes, you can pay zoo admission and go see the animals after getting your shot. Zoo Miami is open at limited capacity, just make sure you wear a ***mask*** at all times.

**Load-Date:** January 14, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Marlins Park vaccinations to start next week. City fighting for residency restriction*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:61S8-T401-DYJM-M54B-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

January 14, 2021 Thursday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** coronavirus

**Length:** 1349 words

**Byline:**  Martin Vassolo, Joey Flechas, Douglas Hanks and Samantha J. Gross

Miami Herald

**Body**

Miami-Dade County residents could start receiving vaccinations for ***COVID***-19 at Marlins Park as soon as Wednesday -- but Miami Mayor Francis Suarez wants to reserve doses only for those who live inside city limits under a policy he's calling "Miami First."

Even though federal regulations and guidance from emergency managers agree that there cannot be residency requirements for vaccines, Suarez wants to keep vaccines for people who live inside city limits. He presented a resolution at Thursday's Miami commission meeting requesting that the city manager and attorney "take all legal steps necessary to prevent non-residents of the city of Miami from receiving vaccines prior to the elderly and vulnerable population of our community and the general population of our city."

Regardless of residency, under orders from Gov. Ron DeSantis, Florida's policy limits vaccinations to people 65 and over, rescue and healthcare workers, and people hospitals determine have conditions severe enough to receive early vaccinations.

The state's top emergency management official came out firmly against residency restrictions Thursday during a House Pandemic and Public Emergencies Committee meeting in Tallahassee.

"You can't do that," said state Emergency Management Director Jared Moskowitz. "We got a dozen-plus fiscally constrained counties. People are going to have to cross county lines. We have transient populations here in the state. We can't do that sort of stuff. It will have major implications down the road."

With a fight over a residency mandate brewing, a slew of government agencies are planning to move coronavirus testing at Marlins Park to one of the ballpark's parking garages while vaccinations are set up on the surface lot west of the stadium. According to a plan proposed by Miami's fire department, officials say they could vaccinate up to 2,240 people each day, but the supply is not expected to meet the demand.

Miami-Dade County officials confirmed on Thursday that Marlins Park is scheduled to receive up to 7,000 doses next week while other county-run sites may close due to a slowdown in federal ***vaccine*** shipments.

The lack of supplies from the federal government is frustrating administrators from Tallahassee to Miami-Dade County government. Miami-Dade has reserved a portion of its ***vaccine*** supplies for county employees 65 and over, who have their own reservations portal for appointments and go to a vaccination site not open to the public.

Most of Miami-Dade's ***vaccine*** supplies have been made available to the public by appointment on a website, miamidade.gov/***vaccine***, that typically takes reservations for 15 or 20 minutes before running out of vaccination slots.

During a presentation for Miami commissioners, Miami Fire Chief Joseph Zahralban said state officials on Thursday morning requested preparations to open the Marlins Park site Wednesday, with a goal of administering about 1,000 vaccines per day.

MIA\_0185MayorSuarezVaccine011421City of Miami Mayor Francis Suarez comments on preventing non-residents of the City of Miami from receiving the ***vaccine*** before the elderly population and the general population of the city during press conference at Miami City Hall on Thursday, January 14, 2021.

Creating ***vaccine*** restrictions

At Miami City Hall, commissioners unanimously instructed the fire department to create a new plan for vaccinating only city residents.

"If it's a city of Miami program, let's make it a city of Miami program for city of Miami residents," Alex Díaz de la Portilla said. "Not for people from other parts of the county, not for people from other parts of the world. We are not the government of the world. We're the government of the city of Miami. It should be for our residents, within the governor's guidelines of 65 and over."

Putting limits on eligibility is expected to come with a price for the city, according to Zahralban, because the state and county could withhold personnel for sites that restrict vaccines to city residents. The fire chief is expected to deliver a new plan, with a budget, by Tuesday morning.

Miami Dade Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** on the vaccination at Tropical ParkMiami Dade Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** addressed the media on Wednesday, January 13, 2021, on the vaccination situation at Tropical Park.

Suarez's promotion of a city-only vaccination program occurred at the same time Miami-Dade commissioners were meeting for a county ***vaccine*** briefing, where county administrators shot down the idea.

Frank Rollason, Miami-Dade's emergency director, said federal rules bar residency restrictions.

"Any comers are to get vaccinated," he said. "That's the direction."

Debate over Suarez's 'Miami First' plan

Eileen Higgins, a county commissioner whose district includes parts of Miami, called it a bad idea to let cities reserve ***vaccine*** doses for their residents.

"We shouldn't allow municipal borders to limit a person's access to life-saving vaccines based on which side of the street they live on," she said.

Suarez, who is in an election year, later gave his approach a slogan on Twitter: "MIAMI FIRST."

suarez miami first ***vaccine*** tweet

His proposal would aim to curb so-called ***vaccine*** tourism, or foreigners who travel to Miami to receive the ***vaccine***. Miami's proximity to Latin America has made it attractive for foreigners with little confidence in the vaccination efforts of their home countries.

"Miami is an international city," Suarez said. "We're seeing a lot of high-profile people who are, in effect, saying that they got priority over our residents."

Broward County Democratic Sen. Lauren Book raised the issue during a meeting of the Florida Senate Select Committee on Pandemic Preparedness and Response on Thursday. She pressed Surgeon General Scott Rivkees about "***vaccine*** tourism" allegations and asked him why there are no residency requirements for seniors in Florida seeking a vaccination.

Rivkees explained the vaccines are a federal asset, and the federal government has instructed states to distribute the ***vaccine*** without restrictions. He said 97% of those vaccinated here are Florida residents.

When Book asked about local governments interested in passing ordinances to restrict inoculations, Rivkees said he did not have an answer as to whether that would be allowed.

He said if people are coming to Florida from out of state or out of the country, "that is something abhorrent and absolutely should not happen. If we are made aware of situations where things are happening, this is something that will be looked into."

Suarez said he doesn't know if it's legal to limit vaccinations to Miami residents only, but he argued the distribution of federal aid during the pandemic should be a precedent.

"When we received federal funding for ***COVID***, we were only allowed to administer it in the city of Miami," he said. "So there are federal requirements that limit us to spending city resources on city residents. It's very possible that if we're going to be getting reimbursement for city expenses, we have to spend it on city residents."

Suarez said he spoke with Miami-Dade Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** on Thursday morning about the city's supply of the ***vaccine***, and that he would speak with her again about his proposal.

He told reporters he was "totally open to collaborating" with the county to vaccinate as many people as possible.

"I totally am open to having a more centralized, cooperative and collaborative process," he said.

Another city that appears to be close to opening a new vaccination site, Doral, plans to offer doses to anyone who is eligible under state rules. Mayor JC Bermudez said his city has a deal with Baptist Health to administer vaccines at Legacy Park. He suggested that if a city tried to mount its own, insular vaccination effort -- the kind of program Miami is mulling -- it would be complicated.

"I don't think this would be possible if we didn't partner with Baptist," Bermudez said, noting that Baptist has been dealing directly with the Department of Health and will provide its own doses of the ***vaccine***. "If a city tries to do this on their own, I don't think it's that simple."

**Load-Date:** January 15, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*COVID vaccine live updates: What you should know in South Florida on Thursday, Jan. 14*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:61S4-T201-DYJM-M4J7-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

January 14, 2021 Thursday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** coronavirus

**Length:** 1939 words

**Byline:**  Michelle Marchante

Miami Herald

**Body**

***COVID***-19 vaccines are now available in South Florida, and the rules on who can get a shot, where and when can be confusing.

Here's what you need to know:

What's new today?

***COVID Vaccine*** 4.jpgDr. Charles Buscemi, a clinical associate professor and assistant chair of FIU's graduate nursing program, volunteered to be one of the clinicians injecting FIU faculty and staff 65 and older Wednesday with the first dose of Moderna's ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine***.

New ***COVID***-19 vaccination sites keep opening in Broward County for seniors 65 and older, and just like with testing, there are rules to know before you can get your first dose. Some of the things to expect: appointments are required, expect long lines and no long-sleeve shirts.

Florida International University is now vaccinating its faculty and staff who are 65 and older, as well as FIU healthcare workers who have direct contact with patients. About 150 people received Moderna's ***vaccine*** Wednesday at the university's main campus off Southwest Eighth Street.

The university said it received vaccines for 2,000 people from Miami-Dade County and the Florida Department of Health. Last week, the school also began scheduling appointments for employees 65 and older through local healthcare providers, including Jackson Health System and Baptist Health of South Florida. FIU has also applied to be a vaccination site.

"This is the light at the end of our tunnel," said Bridget Pelaez, assistant director of operations and safety, one of the department's involved in managing the school's ***vaccine*** distribution.

Zoo Miami is turning into a ***COVID***-19 vaccination site Friday, and its first patients will be those who booked appointments through Miami-Dade County's online portal earlier this week. Future appointments are expected to open in the coming days at miamidade.gov/***vaccine***.

Miami-Dade County has a message to those who have received their first dose of the ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine***: We'll have your second doses when it's time -- and you'll hear from us first.

The process of how to schedule your second ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** injection in South Florida can vary by location. And at state-run Hard Rock Stadium in Miami Gardens, there was some confusion on how to do it. For now, the state says you'll be contacted when it's time for your second dose. That could change in the future.

Who can get ***COVID***-19 vaccines in Florida and who cannot? Do you need proof of residency?

Florida is giving vaccines to healthcare workers, long-term care facility residents and staff, and people 65 and older, including snowbirds. Florida does not plan to require teachers and students to get the ***vaccine***, even if one meant for children becomes available by next school year.

Florida does not have a statewide residency requirement to get the ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine***. This means if you live in Miami-Dade, you can get the ***vaccine*** in Broward or vice versa.

Who should not get a ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine***: People who have had a severe allergic reaction to ingredients in the ***vaccine*** or had a severe reaction after a previous dose. Ingredients of the Pfizer-BioNTech and the Moderna vaccines can be found on FDA.gov.

How many people have received the ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** in Florida?

According to the state's Wednesday ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** report, 707,478 people have been vaccinated in Florida -- with 61,151 people having completed the series of two doses of either Pfizer or Moderna vaccines.

Of those who completed the two dose vaccination, 11,703 were Miami-Dade residents, 9,021 were Broward residents and 53 were Monroe residents.

Miami Dade Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** on the vaccination at Tropical ParkMiami Dade Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** addressed the media on Wednesday, January 13, 2021, on the vaccination situation at Tropical Park.

What ***COVID***-19 vaccines are available in Florida? How many doses do I need?

Florida has two vaccines available: Pfizer BioNTech and Moderna.

The Pfizer-BioNTech ***vaccine*** requires two shots, three weeks apart, and can be given to people 16 and older. Moderna's ***vaccine*** requires two shots, one month apart, and can be given to people 18 and older. Neither ***vaccine*** will give you ***COVID***-19.

The two vaccines are not interchangeable, however, which means that if your first shot was the Pfizer ***vaccine***, your second shot cannot be the Moderna ***vaccine***, according to the CDC.

***COVID***-19 vaccination sites in South Florida?

MIA\_100VaccineTropPark09NEWLong lines of cars wait as people with appointments get the ***COVID vaccine*** at Tropical Park test site on Saturday, Jan. 9, 2021. The Florida Highway Patrol and Miami-Dade Police urged drivers to avoid a portion of Bird Road because large crowds hoping to get the ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** at the park led to traffic jams. Coronavirus numbers are surging in Miami-Date County.

Publix has vaccines available in select Florida counties. South Florida, which has been hit hardest during the pandemic, is not among the locations. That might change in the future. Walgreens, CVS, Winn-Dixie, Walmart and other pharmacies will also eventually have vaccines in stock.

For now, here are your options in South Florida:

Miami-Dade County:

The county has a website, miamidade.gov/***vaccine***, where it plans to post updates on where seniors, and eventually the rest of the general public, will be able to find and schedule ***COVID***-19 vaccination appointments.

The county also schedules appointments through the website. All slots are full, though more are expected to open soon. The county has scheduled appointments for vaccination sites Tropical Park.; Zoo Miami; at the Baptist hospital system; or facilities run by the state's Department of Health.

Marlins Park in Miami, a popular ***COVID***-19 testing site, is in the process of being converted into a vaccination site, date still unknown.

At the moment, here are the other places offering vaccines:

Mount Sinai Medical Center in Miami Beach is booking appointments for people 75 and older and will eventually lower it to 65. Call 305-674-2312 to schedule an appointment, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday, and 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday through Sunday.

Jackson Health System, the county's public hospital network, has launched an online portal for people 65 and older to schedule ***vaccine*** appointments. All of its appointment slots are full, but the hospital plans to add more in the future. To check for available appointments, visit [*https://jhsmiami.org/comvac/*](https://jhsmiami.org/comvac/).

Hard Rock Stadium in Miami Gardens on Friday began providing vaccinations by appointment to seniors and front-line healthcare workers. Appointments filled up quickly. By calling 888-499-0840 or the TTY line at 888-256-8918, you can sign up for an update on when vaccination slots will be open again.

Baptist Health, one of the county's largest private hospitals, began offering ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** appointments Friday to seniors 65 and older and to those at risk of falling seriously ill with the disease. Slots were full within two hours. The hospital expects to have additional appointments available in the future. To check for appointments, visit Baptisthealth.net/***vaccine***.

***COVID*** Baptist 11121linepd.jpegOn the first day Baptist Health began administering the ***COVID***-19 vaccination, lines formed at the site on the Hilton grounds on the hospital's Kendall campus on Jan. 11, 2021.

Seniors 65 and older who seek care with Leon Medical Centers can call customer service at 305-642-5366 to schedule a free ***COVID***-19 vaccination appointment. If you need transportation, let the operator know so they can also schedule a driver to pick you up. Appointments will be scheduled until Leon runs out of vaccines.

Pasteur and Wellmax Medical Centers are hoping to offer ***COVID***-19 vaccines soon to seniors, including non-members. Both clinics are still waiting to receive vaccines.

Florida International University has applied to be a vaccination site. The university also received Moderna doses to vaccinate FIU faculty and staff 65 and older as well as FIU healthcare workers who have direct contact with patients. Vaccinations began Wednesday.

Miami-Dade County has begun contacting homebound seniors age 65 and older who live in county facilities or receive county services to offer vaccination appointments.

Miami Beach has begun administering ***COVID***-19 vaccines to some seniors living in affordable housing or who are confined to their homes.

MIA\_05BROWARDCOVIDVACCINE\_CPJOn Sunday, Jan. 3, 2021, motorists line up for ***COVID***-19 vaccination shots for people who are 65 and older as site staffers assist them at Vista View Park in Davie, Florida.

Broward County:

Broward Health, the hospital network, has all of its vaccination appointments full through February. However, it is working to schedule appointments at Fort Lauderdale's Inter Miami CF Stadium. More on that below:

Fort Lauderdale's Inter Miami CF Stadium is now a ***COVID***-19 vaccination site. Seniors 65 and older, office staff of Broward Health-credentialed physicians and other healthcare providers and their office staff can request an appointment online at BrowardHealth.org and a Broward Health scheduler will then respond to finish the appointment booking.

Memorial Healthcare System ran out of ***COVID***-19 vaccines again. Once doses are available again, appointments can be made through the MyChart portal, [*https://mychart.mhs.net*](https://mychart.mhs.net) for current Memorial Healthcare patients. Others will have to call 954-276-4340.

The appointment-only ***vaccine*** locations listed in the website above are:

The Memorial Regional Conference Center, 3501 Johnson St. in Hollywood, noon to 7:30 p.m. Mondays, 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Tuesday through Friday.

Memorial Specialty Pharmacy, 9581 Premier Pkwy. in Miramar, 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Monday through Saturday.

The Florida Department of Health in Broward County has created a website to schedule ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** appointments. All appointment slots are full. The health department says it plans to add additional appointment slots in the coming weeks at [*https://browardcovidvaccine.com/*](https://browardcovidvaccine.com/).

The appointment-only ***vaccine*** sites listed on the website above include:

Tradewinds Park, 3600 W. Sample Rd., Coconut Creek -- open 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sunday through Thursday.

Vista View Park, 4001 SW 142nd Ave., Davie -- open 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sunday through Thursday.

Markham Park & Target Range, 16001 W. State Road 84 in Sunrise -- open from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday

Holiday Park and War Memorial in Fort Lauderdale, a former ***COVID***-19 testing site that reopened as a ***vaccine*** site.

Central Broward Park and Broward County Stadium, 3700 NW 11th Pl. in Lauderhill.

Coral Square Mall in Coral Springs.

All Cleveland Clinic Florida locations, including its Weston campus, have run out of vaccination appointments for now. Cleveland Clinic said it will resume scheduling appointments through its website for current patients once it gets more doses. To check for slots, visit [*https://my.clevelandclinic.org/landing/****covid****-19-****vaccine****/florida*](https://my.clevelandclinic.org/landing/covid-19-vaccine/florida)

Monroe County:

People in the Florida Keys who are 65 and older will be able to register online or by phone to receive the ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine***, possibly this week, the Florida Health Department in Monroe County told the Miami Herald.

But the department couldn't say when the vaccines will arrive.

So far, Monroe is reserving appointments only for healthcare professionals and people with special needs who are 65 and over and are registered with Monroe County Emergency Management -- meaning they need special assistance during emergency evacuations and times when storm shelters are open.

For seniors in the general population, a website and phone number to schedule ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** appointments is still on hold.

**Load-Date:** January 15, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*We asked how hard it is to get a vaccine in South Florida. You answered. And answered.*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:61S4-T201-DYJM-M4JH-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

January 14, 2021 Thursday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** coronavirus

**Length:** 1515 words

**Byline:**  Samantha J. Gross

Miami Herald

**Body**

Billie Taylor has been trying to get a ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** since appointments were made available to seniors under an executive order signed by Gov. Ron DeSantis about three weeks ago.

Taylor's husband, retired advertising executive and artist Michael Tesch, died of ***COVID***-related complications in November, five months after his diagnosis. She desperately wants the ***vaccine***, now that it's available, but her repeated attempts to log on through Miami-Dade County's portal and websites for local hospitals offering the ***vaccine*** have been fruitless.

"Don't they see that people are dying?" Taylor, 71, said.

The Miami resident says she wrote emails to hospitals, left messages and even sent a letter to Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava***.

She said watching the slow rollout and the small amounts of ***vaccine*** available in each batch of appointments is agonizing, as she remembers what her husband went through.

"It's sort of like going through it twice," she said. "It's genocide to hold back even a week."

Taylor is one of hundreds of Miami Herald readers who responded to a request to share their stories of attempts to get vaccines in South Florida. Many said using online portals was nearly impossible and the long waits for vaccines have been hard to endure. And those responses don't take into account the unknown numbers of seniors who don't know how to sign up using the internet, or don't have family and friends who can help them.

Since the vaccines started going into arms late last month, 96,576 people have been vaccinated in Miami-Dade, which has a population of more than 2.7 million, according to data gathered by Johns Hopkins University. That's about 3.6% of the population. In Broward, which has a population of about 1.9 million, 71,194 people have been vaccinated, or 3.7%.

Health experts say about 70% of the population must be inoculated in order to achieve what they call "herd immunity," the scientific term for what occurs when a large enough proportion of a population has enough immunity to slow the spread of a virus, because fewer people can get infected. It can be achieved by vaccines or if enough people survive the infection to achieve long-lasting immunity. Or it can be a combination of the two.

The lack of guidance from state and county officials, who have depended on hospitals' websites as the main way to request appointments on a first-come, first-served basis, continues to concern public health officials and frustrate South Florida seniors.

"It's been horrible," said 83-year-old Joan Rogers, who lives in the Brickell neighborhood. "I've been on the computer for hours on end. ... It's very confusing and there's no way of calling back to find out. I fill it all out and then I'm not really sure. It's been very frustrating."

Kay Gelletly, 71, of Key West, said she feels "stuck."

"There's no availability and no appointments," she said. "And I'll drive anywhere."

Kendall residents Mel Tenen, 68, and Amy Lomaskin, 72, were able to get appointments after a week of trying and "a lot of persistence and determination and luck." The couple had to set up a virtual command center to secure the appointments: They set up two iPhones, an iPad and a desktop computer to refresh the Miami-Dade County portal.

"When we got through, there was quite a level of internal excitement," said Tenen, whose appointment is Sunday at Tropical Park. "Last week was somewhat frustrating. We started feeling resigned to the fact that we were just going to have to wait a while."

Without the access to computers, Wi-Fi and even the time to spend online vying for an appointment, Tenen recognized that many people who are older or without access to a computer couldn't get an appointment at all.

"I was saying out loud," Tenen said, "it shouldn't have to be this way."

As Florida's ***vaccine*** rollout gets going, cases of ***COVID***-19 continue to climb, with about 14,000 cases of the virus reported Wednesday as the total tops 1.5 million. But the state's well-intended effort to get ahead of other states and open the ***vaccine*** program to everyone 65 and older has led to unexpected pressure on the hospital systems and county governments, where websites and phone lines are quickly overwhelmed.

On Wednesday, during a meeting as part of the Florida Legislature's committee weeks, Florida Surgeon General Scott Rivkees described a supply shortage where the state doesn't know how much ***vaccine*** it is getting from week to week.

""It's heartbreaking," Rivkees said. He promised that "as vaccines get to the state of Florida, we will get it to individuals who are in need."

Sen. Aaron Bean, a Fernandina Beach Republican, said Rivkees and the state need to give Floridians more information. He said many are very confused and frustrated.

"We need help and we need a clear direction and path," said Bean, who works for UF Health Jacksonville. "People will be patient if they know there is a plan in place."

Florida has prioritized a larger group of its population to receive the ***vaccine*** than many other states, a point Gov. DeSantis has used when talking about the vaccination program. He bucked guidance from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to vaccinate seniors 75 and older and front-line workers first, and chose instead to make seniors 65 and older the priority, along with healthcare workers and those with underlying conditions.

With limited federal assistance, the states are pretty much on their own handling the expanded rollout.

DeSantis has urged Floridians to be patient.

"This is like the new iPhone times 10," he said at a press conference in North Florida Tuesday. "It melts phone lines. It melts these reservation systems."

However, the governor has said the responsibility for the bumpy rollout lies mainly with hospital systems and county governments when it comes to logistics.

"The state is not dictating to hospitals how they run their operations," he said at a press conference at Jackson Memorial Hospital last Monday. "That would be a total disaster. These guys are much more competent to be able to deliver healthcare services than a state government could ever be. We are empowering the hospitals."

Those hospitals are overwhelmed.

Jackson Health System in Miami, for instance, doesn't have a phone line to call because "phone lines for this have crashed at other health systems, and that's a bad experience for the patient," a spokeswoman said. Neither does Baptist Health or Broward Health, though the latter says they are working on setting up a call center soon.

Memorial Healthcare System in Broward County does have a number for online scheduling: 954-276-4340. So does Mount Sinai Medical Center in Miami Beach, which is 305-674-2312.

Miami-Dade County's reservation system is online only for now, though the county has been directly calling seniors who live in public housing or receive county services to schedule appointments.

On Monday, the county site had such web traffic issues that Mayor Levine Cava took to Twitter to apologize. On Wednesday, she posted a video to further explain, noting that 80,000 people tried to book just 3,000 spots.

"I know just how urgently so many of you want a ***vaccine***," Levine Cava said. "The limited supply of vaccines that we have is currently not enough for the enormous demand we see from our community."

She underscored the need for more vaccines, noting to viewers that she shares their irritation with the arduous appointment process.

"For anyone who has been struggling to get an appointment for yourself or for a family member, I promise you that I will hear you," she said. "I read every single social media comment myself. I share in your deep frustration."

At a Broward County commission meeting Tuesday Commissioner Nan Rich said there needs to be a bigger focus on helping seniors, especially those in assisted living facilities, and getting those computer savvy, younger relatives to help or a car to get them to an appointment.

And there are other complicating factors that the lack of a system exacerbates. Darlene MacDowell, a blind Broward resident with kidney and heart problems, said she put in a request for someone from Broward Health to call her for an appointment, but she isn't sure she would even be able to go if she got one. She relies on Broward County's paratransit services to run errands, but isn't sure they would accommodate the long lines and wait times at ***vaccine*** distribution sites.

"We've been dropped on our heads," said MacDowell, 84, of Fort Lauderdale. "We've fallen through the cracks. ... I think DeSantis has done an awesome job, but he's not perfect. They forgot about us."

During the Tuesday commission meeting, where commissioners considered a motion to support the vaccinations of essential workers under age 65, Rich said that it's hard to plan on expanding access.

The state's Department of Health in Broward gets ***vaccine*** shipments on short notice, she said, and seniors in places without public distribution sites in Palm Beach County are also coming to Broward for vaccines.

"When you don't know what your supply is from one week to the next, it's really, really hard," she said.

**Load-Date:** January 14, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*105 Publix pharmacies will offer COVID-19 vaccines in Florida. South Florida left out again*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:61S2-5GR1-JC3J-X4SY-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

January 13, 2021 Wednesday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** coronavirus

**Length:** 434 words

**Byline:**  Devoun Cetoute

Miami Herald

**Body**

The Publix ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** program added 56 more stores on Wednesday, a day after 27 Publix pharmacies were added to the state list. None of the 105 pharmacies administering vaccines will be in South Florida, the epicenter of the state's ***COVID***-19 cases.

On Wednesday, Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis said 56 Publix stores in Flagler, St. Johns, Volusia and Collier counties will offer thousands of vaccines to people 65 and older on Thursday through their pharmacies. The 105 stores that will administer the vaccines are mostly in North and Central Florida.

Publix vaccinations by appointment will begin Thursday for the new stores. Those eligible can make an appointment and see store locations at publix.com/covidvaccine.

datawrapper map

The 12 counties that will be administering the ***vaccine*** through Publix are Bay, Citrus, Collier, Escambia, Flagler, Hernando, Marion, Okaloosa, St. Johns, Santa Rosa, Volusia and Walton counties.

Miami-Dade, Broward and Palm Beach counties, the three Southeast Florida counties that have the most coronavirus cases in the state, have not made it into the program.

desantis tweet

Maria Brous, Publix's director of communications, told the Miami Herald when the program began that the company worked with DeSantis' office in selecting the counties. Some factors important to the state were reaching populations of 65 and older and reaching more rural areas, she said.

As of Wednesday, the 12 counties each had fewer than 30,000 cases and 1,000 deaths, according to the Florida Department of Health. Together, they made up 182,481 of the state's 1,517,472 cases and 3,279 of the 23,396 deaths in Florida.

Miami-Dade, by contrast, had 334,217 confirmed cases and 4,472 deaths as of Tuesday. Broward had 153,715 cases and 1,943 deaths, while Palm Beach had 93,994 confirmed cases and 1,983 deaths. The three counties accounted for more than 560,000 of the state's more than 1.5 million ***COVID***-19 cases.

There are talks to start including South Florida in the Publix ***vaccine*** program.

DeSantis met with Palm Beach leaders about stocking and allowing more than 70 Publix stores to administer the ***vaccine*** in the county, the South Florida Sun-Sentinel reported. Palm Beach would be the first county in South Florida to participate in the Publix ***vaccine*** program.

Palm Beach Commissioner Mack Bernard told the Sun-Sentinel each store could offer about 100-150 daily appointments per day, allowing for more than 7,000 seniors to be vaccinated daily.

Rachel Johnson, communications director for Miami-Dade Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava***, said she hasn't heard of plans to bring the program to the county.

**Load-Date:** January 14, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*You've been vaccinated for COVID-19? The next challenge: Getting your second shot*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:61S2-5GR1-JC3J-X4TH-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

January 13, 2021 Wednesday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** miami\_dade

**Length:** 1176 words

**Byline:**  Douglas Hanks and Samantha J. Gross

Miami Herald

**Body**

Minutes after receiving his ***COVID***-19 vaccination at a county park Wednesday, Lane Middleton, 68, rolled down his window to show the white card telling him he'll need a second shot sometime after Feb. 10 to complete the immunization process and start contemplating life without coronavirus dread.

"Zoom is my middle name," the Miami Shores lawyer said, from the parking lot of the appointment-only vaccination site set up at Tropical Park. "I haven't been out to lunch since March."

State and local officials insist Middleton shouldn't worry about that second, final dose being available when it's time.

The administration of Gov. Ron DeSantis is instructing local governments and hospitals, as well as the state health department, to vaccinate as many people who are 65 and over as possible and count on the federal ***vaccine*** supply chain to provide the needed second doses for people three to four weeks later.

"As of right now, there should be zero concern," he told reporters this week. "People should rest assured that our policy in Florida is to get out the second dose."

State statistics report about 700,000 people have received ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** injections statewide. Of those, about 9% are considered "fully immunized" after receiving second doses. About 2% -- more than 15,000 people -- are listed as "overdue" for not having a second dose within the recommended time frame.

Miami-Dade sites are using both of the vaccines approved in the United States, and federal guidelines call for at least three or four weeks between the two doses. The two vaccines also shouldn't be interchanged, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said. So someone receiving a Pfizer-BioNTech injection shouldn't sign up for a follow-up shot using a Moderna dose.

MIA\_203VaccineTropPark13NEWPPPMayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** talks about vaccination in Miami-Dade County during a visit to the Tropical Park ***COVID*** vaccination site in Miami on Wednesday, Jan. 13, 2021.

Information released by the CDC said the window between the two doses is designed to prevent second vaccinations from occurring too quickly to be effective. But there is no "maximum interval" on how long someone can wait between doses, according to the CDC.

The Trump administration had been reserving ***vaccine*** doses for second-round injections, but changed policy this week to expand the number of people getting their first vaccination shots. That increases the stakes for drugmakers to produce more doses in the coming weeks or risk having to slow down the availability of first-round injections in order to provide second doses for people already partially vaccinated.

Justin Senior, the state's former Medicaid director and president of the Safety Net Hospital Alliance of Florida, said there is still little known about how the federal government's change in distribution methods will affect the state.

Senior said the hospitals his group represents -- including Broward Health System, Memorial Healthcare System, Jackson Health System and Mount Sinai Medical Center -- have the capacity to do about 45,000 shots per day statewide. But that pace would change if hospitals couldn't count on a steady supply of second doses, he said.

"It's a supply issue, pure and simple," he said.

At the state-run Hard Rock vaccination site, people who arrive for their vaccination appointments are given the same kind of card that Middleton received at the county's Tropical Park site. It includes the date when the next vaccination window begins.

Margaret Thompson, 73, snagged one of the coveted ***vaccine*** slots at Hard Rock Stadium, and left with January 29th on her card. She reported being told by a site worker to go home and book an appointment on the same online portal she used to reserve her first slot.

"That never materialized," said Thompson, who lives in Miami. "There was nothing, I check every day about 25 times."

***COVID vaccine*** live updates: What you should know in South Florida on Wednesday, Jan. 13

Thompson said she has called the state Department of Health, the governor's office, as well as the offices of Miami Mayor Francis Suarez and Miami-Dade Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** for clarity on what she should do.

"I'm going to find a way to get it if it kills me," Thompson said.

A spokeswoman for Florida's Division of Emergency Management, which oversees ***vaccine*** distribution, said recipients like Thompson should wait to hear back on booking the second appointment, which shouldn't occur before the date on the card.

Healthcare workers and senior citizens who get vaccinated will have their contact information uploaded into SHOTS, a system the state is using to keep track of who is getting a ***vaccine*** and when their next dose needs to be.

Confused about your second ***COVID vaccine*** dose at Hard Rock Stadium? There's a plan

Patients will then be contacted, either by phone or email, about two weeks after their first dose to schedule their booster shot, Emergency Management spokeswoman Samantha Bequer said in an email. She said Hard Rock Stadium will eventually be able to schedule the second appointment on-site but that the process is still in the works.

MIA\_202VaccineTropPark13NEWPPPNurses prepare ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** shots for Miami-Dade County residents with appointments at Tropical Park in Miami on Wednesday, Jan. 13, 2021.

For the county-run vaccination sites -- Zoo Miami is scheduled to join Tropical Park as an appointment-only, drive-thru location later in the week -- people should expect to receive an email about a second appointment after receiving the first vaccination.

Miami-Dade Fire Chief Alan Cominsky, whose agency oversees the county ***vaccine*** operation, said people vaccinated at county sites should expect to hear about a second appointment "about a week" before the date listed on the card they're given after receiving the first injection.

"There are processes we have set up to make sure nobody falls through the cracks," he said.

Daily vaccination statistics published by Miami-Dade show about 13% of the more than 85,000 doses injected countywide involved second shots. That's about the same portion of completed vaccinations at the county's Jackson Health hospital system, where roughly 15% of the more than 31,000 vaccines injected were second doses, spokesperson Lidia Amoretti said.

"We are following directions. We are giving ***vaccine*** as fast as we get it," Jackson CEO Carlos Migoya said in early January, when the hospital announced public vaccinations by appointment. "We're not holding back any ***vaccine***, because the supplies are coming."

Addressing reporters in Tropical Park Thursday, Levine Cava said the anxiety over second doses reflects the overall problem of Florida's most populous county not having enough ***vaccine*** supply to meet demand.

"We need more sites. We need more ***vaccine***," she said. "People are ready to get on with their lives."

Miami Herald staff writer Michelle Marchante contributed to this report.

This article was updated to correct the name of Lane Middleton, the Miami Shores lawyer who received a ***vaccine*** dose at Tropical Park on Wednesday.

**Load-Date:** January 14, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Despite COVID turmoil, construction underway at PortMiami's newest cruise terminal*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:61RX-5DD1-DYJM-M3X1-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

January 13, 2021 Wednesday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** tourism\_cruises

**Length:** 926 words

**Byline:**  Taylor Dolven

Miami Herald

**Body**

By November, PortMiami will open another glossy new cruise terminal in its years-long effort to remake the city skyline.

Despite cruising's pandemic stall, Miami-Dade County celebrated groundbreaking Tuesday for the palm grove-inspired Terminal V -- named for the industry's newest cruise company, Virgin Voyages.

"This industry is resilient," said Virgin Voyages CEO Tom McAlpin, over the sound of bulldozers and hammering just yards away from him. "The future is very bright."

Miami-Dade Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava***, port director Juan Kuryla and eight county commissioners attended the groundbreaking ceremony delayed by the ***COVID***-19 pandemic from its June construction start. It was the first celebratory event of its kind at the port since the pandemic paralyzed the cruise industry in mid-March.

Virgin\_Terminal\_MJO\_7.JPGConstruction of Virgin Voyages' Terminal V is underway at PortMiami in Miami, Florida, on Tuesday, Jan. 12, 2021. Miami-Dade County Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava***, CEO of Virgin Voyages Tom McAlpin and county commissioners participated in a groundbreaking ceremony Tuesday to celebrate the construction project.

Virgin first announced the new terminal in November 2018, long before ***COVID***-19 wreaked havoc on the industry. Royal Caribbean Group opened the first branded terminal of its kind at the port in 2018, followed by Norwegian Cruise Line Holdings in 2020. MSC Cruises and Carnival Corporation are also planning new dedicated terminals.

Virgin Voyages' first ship, Scarlet Lady, was scheduled to begin cruising from PortMiami in March, just as the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention banned cruising after ***COVID***-19 outbreaks and deaths on several ships. Scarlet Lady never hosted passengers from Miami and has since left U.S. waters for Italy, where McAlpin said it is easier to get crew to and from the ship.

Amid the industry upheaval, the Virgin cruise terminal's future was in doubt, according to Michael Roblin, a senior project manager with Suffolk Construction, the lead building firm.

"This project almost went away," he said.

Originally slated to cost Miami-Dade County around $179 million, the Terminal V project was deemed too expensive when Virgin and PortMiami renegotiated terms after the ***shutdown***. The design and construction teams adjusted the plans to lower the price tag, Roblin said. For example, a planned bridge from the parking garage across the street was scrapped, and the construction company donated some funds.

Virgin\_Terminal\_MJO\_13.JPGSenior project manager with Suffolk Construction Michael Roblin gives a tour of the construction being done at Virgin Voyages' Terminal V at PortMiami on Tuesday, Jan. 12, 2021.

The changes trimmed about $20 million. The project -- which now costs $158,641,073.20, according to an agreement approved by Miami-Dade commissioners in October -- is still expected to meet its original completion date of November of this year. The project includes adding land and a new seawall to allow Virgin's ships to dock at the port's end, perpendicular to existing moorings.

Whether passenger cruises will be operating by then is still an open question. Companies are still awaiting guidance from the CDC about how they will be conducting mock cruises, the next step in a long list of requirements from the agency before cruising can resume.

For now, Virgin Voyages has canceled all cruises through May 8. The company's second ship, Valiant Lady, is expected to debut in July. Virgin Voyages will pay the county back for the cost of the terminal and more in passenger fees over the course of its 30-year usage deal.

Designed by Miami-based architecture firm Arquitectonica, the terminal's roof will resemble a palm canopy for passengers waiting to board looking up from inside the terminal and for those looking down from the ship's upper decks. Nestled directly next to the port bridge, the ship will have a direct view of AmericanAirlines Arena, the Dame Zaha Hadid building, and the rest of the downtown Miami skyline.

McAlpin, the Virgin Voyages CEO and Miami native, called the view "iconic."

"We've got the best spot," he said.

Virgin\_Terminal\_MJO\_5.JPGCEO of Virgin Voyages Tom McAlpin participates in the groundbreaking ceremony for Virgin Voyages' Terminal V at PortMiami on Jan. 12, 2021.

McAlpin said the building is on track to achieve "gold" status from the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED), second only to "platinum" in the organization's rating system for building sustainability. It will be the first building to achieve LEED "gold" status at the port. Royal Caribbean Group's Terminal A is LEED "silver."

"We want to do the right thing," said McAlpin. "It didn't make sense for us to build a new terminal if it wasn't LEED gold. We put a lot of effort into it. It costs a little bit more obviously to do that, but we think it's the right thing to do."

Five hundred construction workers have worked on the project thus far, and Roblin expects another 500 will work on it before it is completed. To account for sea level rise, the floor of the terminal sits 11.5 feet above the water, Roblin said.

Though the timing for cruising's comeback is still uncertain, Mayor Levine Cava said the Terminal V groundbreaking is a positive sign of the industry's recovery.

"The industry understands that they can't have a repeat of what has happened in the past," she said. "Everyone is waiting and watching for when it is safe to sail again. We are the Cruising Capital. ... We've been very innovative and aggressive to make sure we remain the Cruising Capital."

**Load-Date:** January 13, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*COVID vaccine live updates: What you should know in South Florida on Wednesday, Jan. 13*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:61RX-TST1-JC3J-X3HD-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

January 13, 2021 Wednesday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** coronavirus

**Length:** 1871 words

**Byline:**  Michelle Marchante and Howard Cohen

Miami Herald

**Body**

***COVID***-19 vaccines are now available in South Florida, and the rules on who can get a shot, where and when can be confusing.

Here's what you need to know:

What's new today?

MIA\_203VaccineTropPark13NEWPPPMayor ***Daniella Levine Cava***, talks to the media about vaccination in Miami-Date County during a visit to the Tropical Park ***Covid*** Vaccination site in Miami. on Wednesday, January 13, 2021.

Coral Springs opened a ***COVID***-19 vaccination site at the Coral Square Mall Wednesday. But there has been confusion. You do need an appointment despite some potentially misleading language you may have heard via some local radio stations, according to the city. Coral Square Mall location is a "walk in with appointment (not drive thru) site." That does not mean "walk up" without an appointment.

Memorial Healthcare System announced Wednesday morning that there are ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** appointment slots available again. Current patients were told they could schedule an appointment through their MyChart portal, [*https://mychart.mhs.net*](https://mychart.mhs.net). Others have to call 954-276-4340. But by 11:30 a.m., Wednesday, the website said all of those slots were filled and to check back when you can.

Applications are live for a fresh round of Paycheck Protection Program loans worth more than $284 billion for businesses that need help paying their bills during the ***COVID***-19 pandemic. Those who received funds in the first-go-around last year can reapply starting Wednesday if they meet select criteria. Expenses paid with a PPP loan, even if forgiven, can also be deducted on your business' 2020 taxes. To apply, visit sba.gov.

The federal government on Tuesday announced it will be releasing millions of reserved ***COVID***-19 doses, including doses that were being held back for the second round of shots. Officials involved with the country's ***vaccine*** distribution said it was always part of the plan despite pushing back on a similar idea from President-elect Joe Biden last week, according to U.S. News & World Report.

According to the Florida's Tuesday ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** report, 648,353 people have been vaccinated in the state -- with 51,234 people completing the series of two doses of either Pfizer or Moderna vaccines.

More Publix pharmacies will be able to administer ***COVID***-19 vaccines in Florida, adding to the 22 stores in the state already scheduling appointments. The stores are not in South Florida. Appointments are set to begin Thursday and can be scheduled at publix.com/covidvaccine.

A new appointment-only ***COVID***-19 vaccination site for seniors opened Wednesday at Coral Square Mall in Coral Springs. But don't head for 9469 W. Atlantic Blvd. with your sleeves rolled up just yet. Appointments won't be available until the thousands of people who booked an appointment earlier this month through Broward County's Department of Health get their shots first.

Who can get ***COVID***-19 vaccines in Florida and who cannot? Do you need proof of residency?

Florida is giving vaccines to healthcare workers, long-term care facility residents and staff, and people 65 and older, including snowbirds. Florida does not plan to require teachers and students to get the ***vaccine***, even if one meant for children becomes available by next school year.

Florida does not have a statewide residency requirement to get the ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine***. This means if you live in Miami-Dade, you can get the ***vaccine*** in Broward or vice versa.

Who should not get a ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine***: People who have had a severe allergic reaction to ingredients in the ***vaccine*** or had a severe reaction after a previous dose. Ingredients of the Pfizer-BioNTech and the Moderna vaccines can be found on FDA.gov.

What ***COVID***-19 vaccines are available in Florida? How many doses do I need?

Florida has two vaccines available: Pfizer BioNTech and Moderna.

The Pfizer-BioNTech ***vaccine*** requires two shots, three weeks apart, and can be given to people 16 and older. Moderna's ***vaccine*** requires two shots, one month apart, and can be given to people 18 and older. Neither ***vaccine*** will give you ***COVID***-19.

The two vaccines are not interchangeable, however, which means that if your first shot was the Pfizer ***vaccine***, your second shot cannot be the Moderna ***vaccine***, according to the CDC.

***COVID***-19 vaccination sites in South Florida?

Publix has vaccines available in select Florida counties. South Florida, which has been hit hardest during the pandemic, is not among the locations. That might change in the future. Walgreens, CVS, Winn-Dixie, Walmart and other pharmacies will also eventually have vaccines in stock.

For now, here are your options in South Florida:

Miami-Dade County:

The county has a website, miamidade.gov/***vaccine***, where it plans to post updates on where seniors, and eventually the rest of the general public, will be able to find and schedule ***COVID***-19 vaccination appointments.

The county also schedules appointments through the website. All slots are full, though more are expected to open soon. Previously, the county has scheduled appointments for its drive-thru vaccination site at Tropical Park, 7900 SW 40th St.; at the Baptist hospital system; or facilities run by the state's Department of Health.

Marlins Park in Miami, a popular ***COVID***-19 testing site, is in the process of being converted into a vaccination site, date still unknown.

At the moment, here are the other places offering vaccines:

Mount Sinai Medical Center in Miami Beach is booking appointments for people 75 and older and will eventually lower it to 65. Call 305-674-2312 to schedule an appointment, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday, and 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday through Sunday.

Jackson Health System, the county's public hospital network, has launched an online portal for people 65 and older to schedule ***vaccine*** appointments. All of its appointment slots are full, but the hospital plans to add more in the future. To check for available appointments, visit [*https://jhsmiami.org/comvac/*](https://jhsmiami.org/comvac/).

Hard Rock Stadium in Miami Gardens on Friday began providing vaccinations by appointment to seniors and front-line healthcare workers. Appointments filled up quickly. By calling 888-499-0840 or the TTY line at 888-256-8918, you can sign up for an update on when vaccination slots will be open again.

Baptist Health, one of the county's largest private hospitals, began offering ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** appointments Friday to seniors 65 and older and to those at risk of falling seriously ill with the disease. Slots were full within two hours. The hospital expects to have additional appointments available in the future. To check for appointments, visit Baptisthealth.net/***vaccine***.

***COVID*** Baptist 11121linepd.jpegOn the first day Baptist Health began administering the ***COVID***-19 vaccination, lines formed at the site on the Hilton grounds on the hospital's Kendall campus on Jan. 11, 2021.

Seniors 65 and older who seek care with Leon Medical Centers can call customer service at 305-642-5366 to schedule a free ***COVID***-19 vaccination appointment. If you need transportation, let the operator know so they can also schedule a driver to pick you up. Appointments will be scheduled until Leon runs out of vaccines.

Pasteur and Wellmax Medical Centers are hoping to offer ***COVID***-19 vaccines soon to seniors, including non-members. Both clinics are still waiting to receive vaccines.

Florida International University has applied to be a vaccination site. The university is also receiving Moderna doses to vaccinate FIU healthcare faculty and staff members who have direct contact with patients, possibly this week.

Miami-Dade County has begun contacting homebound seniors age 65 and older who live in county facilities or receive county services to offer vaccination appointments.

Miami Beach has begun administering ***COVID***-19 vaccines to some seniors living in affordable housing or who are confined to their homes.

MIA\_05BROWARDCOVIDVACCINE\_CPJOn Sunday, Jan. 3, 2021, motorists line up for ***COVID***-19 vaccination shots for people who are 65 and older as site staffers assist them at Vista View Park in Davie, Florida.

Broward County:

Broward Health, the hospital network, has all of its vaccination appointments full through February. However, it is working to schedule appointments at Fort Lauderdale's Inter Miami CF Stadium. More on that below:

Fort Lauderdale's Inter Miami CF Stadium is now a ***COVID***-19 vaccination site. Seniors 65 and older, office staff of Broward Health-credentialed physicians and other healthcare providers and their office staff can request an appointment online at BrowardHealth.org and a Broward Health scheduler will then respond to finish the appointment booking.

Memorial Healthcare System has ***COVID***-19 vaccines available for senior citizens again. The hospital is now offering Moderna vaccines. Previously, it was giving out Pfizer-BioNTech. appointments can be made at the MyChart portal, [*https://mychart.mhs.net*](https://mychart.mhs.net) for current Memorial Healthcare patients. Others will have to call 954-276-4340.

The appointment-only ***vaccine*** locations listed in the website above are:

The Memorial Regional Conference Center, 3501 Johnson St. in Hollywood, noon to 7:30 p.m. Mondays, 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Tuesday through Friday.

Memorial Specialty Pharmacy, 9581 Premier Pkwy. in Miramar, 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Monday through Saturday.

The Florida Department of Health in Broward County has created a website to schedule ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** appointments. All appointment slots are full. The health department says it plans to add additional appointment slots in the coming weeks at [*https://browardcovidvaccine.com/*](https://browardcovidvaccine.com/).

The appointment-only ***vaccine*** sites listed on the website above include:

Tradewinds Park, 3600 W. Sample Rd., Coconut Creek -- open 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sunday through Thursday.

Vista View Park, 4001 SW 142nd Ave., Davie -- open 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sunday through Thursday.

Markham Park & Target Range, 16001 W. State Road 84 in Sunrise -- open from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday

Holiday Park and War Memorial in Fort Lauderdale, a former ***COVID***-19 testing site that reopened as a ***vaccine*** site.

Central Broward Park and Broward County Stadium, 3700 NW 11th Pl. in Lauderhill.

Coral Square Mall in Coral Springs.

All Cleveland Clinic Florida locations, including its Weston campus, have run out of vaccination appointments for now. Cleveland Clinic said it will resume scheduling appointments through its website for current patients once it gets more doses. To check for slots, visit [*https://my.clevelandclinic.org/landing/****covid****-19-****vaccine****/florida*](https://my.clevelandclinic.org/landing/covid-19-vaccine/florida)

Monroe County:

People in the Florida Keys who are 65 and older will be able to register online or by phone to receive the ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine***, possibly this week, the Florida Health Department in Monroe County told the Miami Herald.

But the department couldn't say when the vaccines will arrive.

So far, Monroe is reserving appointments only for healthcare professionals and people with special needs who are 65 and over and are registered with Monroe County Emergency Management -- meaning they need special assistance during emergency evacuations and times when storm shelters are open.

For seniors in the general population, a website and phone number to schedule ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** appointments is still on hold.

**Load-Date:** January 14, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Miami-Dade's vaccine website buckles from high demand, and mayor apologizes*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:61RG-WFX1-DYJM-M41F-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

January 11, 2021 Monday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** coronavirus

**Length:** 617 words

**Byline:**  Michelle Marchante and Douglas Hanks

Miami Herald

**Body**

Miami-Dade shut down its ***COVID***-19 vaccination website shortly after it went live again Monday as demand for ***vaccine*** doses continues to overwhelm supply.

A county spokesperson said traffic on the reservation website spiked as the site went live at 2 p.m., overwhelming the system and prompting a brief ***shutdown*** of the portal. It was back up before 3 p.m., and about 2,000 appointments were scooped up within 10 minutes.

"The site never actually crashed," said Rachel Johnson, communications director for Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava***. "We took it down to try to make adjustments, given the high demand."

levine cava tweet

It was the third time in five days that Miami-Dade released ***vaccine*** appointments for people 65 and older, but the first time the reservation website shut down to users. Levine Cava posted a statement on Twitter thanking people for their patience "as demand is extremely high."

"We apologize for the issues with our ***vaccine*** appointment site," she said in the 2:32 p.m. statement. "We are working hard to bring the portal back up."

Later Monday evening came news appointments were available again. Levine Cava announced on Twitter the site would reopen at 7:15 p.m. with a "very small" number of appointments the county had held back earlier in the day to avoid over-booking. The county didn't announce the new slots in a press release, and the site was still open until about 7:45 p.m.

While the last two times saw Miami-Dade open the reservation site hours after announcing the planned release of 2,000 vaccination appointments, news of Monday's launch went public on Sunday.

The extra notice for the Monday afternoon re-opening likely had more people trying to book appointments when the site went live at 2 p.m., Johnson said. She said about 36,000 people were trying to use the site within the first five minutes, meaning there was 1 open vaccination slot for every 18 people trying to book one.

Miami-Dade received about 5,000 doses of the Moderna ***vaccine*** from Florida and initially offered them to about 2,000 first responders in the county fire department. With fewer than 450 employees in the agency agreeing to be vaccinated in the first round, Miami-Dade set up an internal vaccination website for all county employees 65 and over, and a public website for others who are 65 and older to book appointments.

Miami-Dade has received additional doses from the state, Johnson said, with about 6,000 appointments booked during the three short windows of online reservations.

Tweet

On Thursday, it took about 15 minutes to book 1,900 appointments for the county's new drive-thru vaccination site at Tropical Park. And on Friday, it took about 25 minutes to book 2,000 appointments for injections at Tropical Park and through the Baptist hospital system or facilities run by the state's Department of Health.

On Monday, Commissioner Danielle Cohen Higgins said the county was adding an appointment-only vaccination site at Zoo Miami in South Miami-Dade. She later deleted the Twitter post announcing the news, but Johnson confirmed Monday evening the vaccination site was opening Friday at the county-owned zoo for people who managed to get appointments there during the Monday booking window.

Miami-Dade's vaccination website, miamidade.gov/***vaccine***, has links and telephone numbers for vaccination options in the county, including the state-run site at Hard Rock Stadium (which requires appointments) and reservation portals for hospitals taking reservations for the injections.

'It's a zoo.' Large crowds trying to get the ***COVID vaccine*** jam traffic around Tropical Park

Baptist Health is scheduling ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** appointments. Can you still get one?

Miami flash briefing player embed

**Load-Date:** January 12, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Miami Dade College employees 65-plus can get COVID vaccines. Other plans in the works*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:61RH-HV51-DYJM-M4PB-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

January 11, 2021 Monday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** education

**Length:** 591 words

**Byline:**  Michelle Marchante

Miami Herald

**Body**

Miami Dade College, like other schools, is trying to partner with South Florida hospitals to secure ***COVID***-19 vaccinations for its workforce, and eventually, its students.

MDC President Madeline Pumariega finalized a deal Friday that would give employees 65 and older the chance to get the ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine***. The vaccines would be given by appointment through Jackson Health System, Miami-Dade County's public hospital network. Vaccinations could begin this week.

The college is also in talks with Miami-Dade County, and Baptist Health of South Florida and its Miami Cancer Institute.

What's one of the possibilities being discussed?

Qualified MDC students and faculty in its medical assistant, physician assistant and nursing programs could help administer the ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** to seniors, and eventually the rest of the community. And MDC locations could serve as vaccination sites. In exchange, the college wants vaccines for its employees and students.

"This will help relieve the burden for these entities to remove health professionals from the front lines of medical treatment to handle the administration of vaccines," MDC spokesman Juan Mendieta told the Miami Herald in an email.

He said MDC's campuses have previously been used during and after emergencies to help provide aid, including for food and technology distribution during the pandemic. Now, the college is hoping to be "part of the solution."

If the partnerships are finalized, Mendieta said it would give students important experience and help address staffing shortages the county and hospitals will likely face as they try to get the community vaccinated quickly.

South Florida has seen busy phone lines, crashed websites and quickly disappearing vaccination appointments. Some seniors with appointments have been stuck in long lines for hours at drive-thru vaccination sites in Miami-Dade and Broward counties.

MDC, FIU work to get ***COVID***-19 vaccines

In April, when hospitals were in need of more ventilators to care for severely ill ***COVID***-19 patients, Florida Education Commissioner Richard Corcoran urged all college presidents to see what they could loan to hospitals. MDC's medical campus was one of the schools that responded. It loaned 17 ventilators -- which it uses for hands-on teaching -- to its next-door neighbor, Jackson Memorial Hospital.

Another school loaning ventilators to hospitals was Florida International University, which has helped staff the ***COVID***-19 testing site located on the county's fairgrounds in Tamiami Park, next to the university's main campus off Southwest Eighth Street.

On Friday night, FIU announced that Miami-Dade County Mayor ***Daniella Levine*** ***Cava*** and the Florida Department of Health would be giving the school a limited amount of Moderna ***COVID***-19 vaccines. FIU said it would use the doses to vaccinate healthcare faculty and staff that have direct contact with patients, as early as this week.

FIU, which had applied to be a vaccination site, also announced last week it had a limited amount of vaccination appointments for its faculty and staff 65 and older through Jackson and Baptist Health.

Regardless which type of partnership MDC, FIU or any other school secures, the colleges and universities would still have to follow Florida's vaccination orders on who can get the ***vaccine***. Currently, only healthcare workers, long-term care facilities and people 65 and older can get the ***vaccine*** in Florida.

MDC said it expects to continue discussions this week.

Where can seniors get the ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** in South Florida? Here's the growing list

**Load-Date:** January 11, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Miami-Dade opened new vaccination slots at 4 p.m. They didn't last long.*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:61PW-MDM1-DYJM-M2WS-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

January 8, 2021 Friday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** coronavirus

**Length:** 344 words

**Byline:**  Douglas Hanks and Devoun Cetoute

Miami Herald

**Body**

At 4 p.m. Friday Miami-Dade reopened its reservations web page for ***COVID***-19 vaccinations. Within 25 minutes, it was closed again after booking about 2,000 appointments for vaccinations into next week.

Friday's total of new appointments is slightly more than the 1,900 appointments made Thursday when Miami-Dade booked them in 15 minutes, the county said.

The Friday appointments were mostly for vaccines that will be injected either at the Baptist hospital system or facilities run by the state's Department of Health, a county spokeswoman said.

***COVID vaccine*** live updates: What you should know in South Florida on Friday, Jan. 8

"We are working closely with all our partners to make additional vaccination sites available as we receive new supplies," Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** said in a press release.

The statement added: "Demand for vaccines is currently much greater than existing supply, and Miami-Dade County along with its partners is working hard to make vaccines available to the community as fast as new supplies are received."

Charles Levy, 26, said he was able to secure two appointment slots for his grandparents, both in their 70s. "They were really happy to hear I got them the appointment, as they've been scared to go out of the house much since March," said Levy, a Miami Lakes resident who works in advertising.

Raul Vidaurre said he was frustrated with the amount of information he had to enter -- and re-enter -- when trying to book appointments for his parents, who are both in their 60s. He did get through and secure them a pair of slots but called the process daunting.

"My mom was trying to do it on her phone while I was on my computer," said Vidaurre, 40, and a digital organizer for a local union. "She kept getting stuck while I was doing my dad's, so I told her to try on her laptop. While she was doing that I was able to finish my dad's and get through hers."

The reservations were available at the county's ***COVID***-19 vaccination site, miamidade.gov/***vaccine***, which includes links and phone numbers for other ***vaccine*** options in Miami-Dade.

**Load-Date:** January 8, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Baptist's COVID vaccine site goes live, with issues  -- but the most persistent get a spot*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:61PV-YXG1-JC3J-X2BS-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

January 8, 2021 Friday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** coronavirus

**Length:** 632 words

**Byline:**  Samantha J. Gross and Ana Claudia Chacin

Miami Herald

**Body**

On Friday morning, Baptist Health's website to book ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** appointments went live -- but not without technical errors and glitches.

Baptist booked 13,000 appointments for those 65 and older as well as those who have certain existing conditions that make them more vulnerable to ***COVID***-19, a group that was not included in other ***vaccine*** sign-ups across Miami-Dade and Broward counties.

Instead of slots quickly filling up like they did elsewhere, Baptist's site seemed to benefit those who kept trying. Sometimes, users would get an error message after clicking 'Schedule Your Appointment' on the hospital's site. Other times, users got to the page where they were able to schedule the appointment.

Andrea Strudwick, 36, of Davie, started checking the Baptist site early Friday morning to try and make an appointment for her grandmother and her stepfather. She said at first, she could get all the way to the end of the process but wasn't able to confirm the appointment.

She got an error message: "We're currently not accepting online bookings for this visit type."

After periodically reloading the site, she was finally able to get a slot for her grandmother on Feb. 11 at the Hilton Miami Dadeland.

Baptist spokeswoman Georgi Pipkin wrote in an email that the scheduling link went live "shortly before" 9 a.m.

"With overwhelming volume to our online appointment system, we experienced some delays, but all appointments were booked in approximately two hours," Pipkin wrote.

Ronald Rodríguez, who was trying to book appointments for his elderly parents, said he was frustrated Baptist never advertised the opening time. He refreshed his browser repeatedly since 7 a.m., only to find an error message.

"This rollout has been one problem after another. I can't imagine what elderly people who are not computer savvy are going through if they don't have someone to help," said Rodríguez, 41, of Pinecrest. "I'm just glad my parents are OK and I'm working from home so I can do this for them. But many others aren't so lucky, and what? They just sit there waiting? It's ridiculous."

With a little web savvy and maneuvering, others had an easier time.

Alex Nostro, 32, of Miami said he was able to schedule eight of his elderly family members, in-laws and friends by putting them all in a group chat where they could share their information for him to input. He wanted to input more, but his luck ran out at 10 a.m.

"It's been my hobby all week, figuring out these websites," Nostro said.

He said while the Jackson Health sign-up Tuesday was easy and straightforward, the availability ran out quickly. The Tropical Park sign-up was a "huge mess," he said. With Baptist, the link was broken almost immediately, but Nostro resolved the issue by using his computer history instead of hitting the "back" button to retrieve the link.

"Each of the three services needed different information from people. No one who is 85 is able to navigate these on their own," he said. "I am happy to do it. ... It just takes a little tenacity."

Baptist did not immediately respond to requests for comment from the Miami Herald.

Baptist is administering both the Pfizer-BioNtech and Moderna vaccines. There's no cost to those who receive them since taxpayers foot the bill, and appointments begin Monday.

Pipkin said additional vaccination sites will open soon and more appointment times will become available as the hospital receives more vaccines. Vaccinations are by appointment only, with no walk-ups.

On Friday, Miami-Dade Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** announced through a release that the county would reopen its portal for people 65 and over to make appointments. The portal will open at 4 p.m. Friday.

On Thursday, when the county released its first round of appointment slots, all 1,900 were booked within minutes.

**Load-Date:** January 8, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*COVID vaccine live updates: What you should know in South Florida on Wednesday, Jan. 6*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:61PD-C691-JC3J-X2DC-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

January 6, 2021 Wednesday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** coronavirus

**Length:** 1315 words

**Byline:**  Michelle Marchante and Howard Cohen

Miami Herald

**Body**

***COVID***-19 vaccines are now available in South Florida, and the rules on who can get a shot, where and when can be confusing.

Here's what you need to know:

What's new today?

Gov. Ron DeSantis was scheduled to hold a press conference at Hard Rock Stadium in Miami Gardens. But before DeSantis spoke, first responders and those 65 and over, or "tier 1a" residents, were already being inoculated with the ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine***. Local fire chiefs identified people to invite them to the vaccination site. There was no public portal available for seniors to apply to get vaccinated at Hard Rock Wednesday. DeSantis called Wednesday morning's vaccinations at the Hard Rock "a soft opening" to "make sure things were going well." The soft opening will last a few days until the site opens to the regular public.

Miami-Dade's overwhelmed ***COVID***-19 vaccination efforts should expand dramatically in the coming weeks, with almost every willing senior citizen vaccinated by early February and more than 1 million people receiving doses by May, said the head of the county's public hospital system. Jackson Health CEO Carlos Migoya's bullish prediction captures just how far Miami-Dade has to go in its vaccination efforts.

Seniors hoping to schedule a ***COVID***-19 vaccination have hit busy signals, glitchy recordings and crashed websites across Florida, including in Miami-Dade and Broward counties. In a Tuesday news conference in Ocala, Gov. DeSantis said he told overwhelmed health departments to "put more people on these phones."

For months, Floridians, healthcare industry groups and elected officials have struggled to decipher DeSantis' vague or conflicting orders. Now they're scrambling to adapt to his ever-changing vaccination strategy. Officials say it's lack of transparency that has fueled the chaos and confusion Florida is seeing during the largest ***vaccine*** rollout in American history.

Florida International University has applied to be a ***COVID***-19 vaccination site in Miami-Dade County. If approved, and depending on how many vaccines it received, FIU could eventually provide doses to members of the university community, including students, faculty, staff and their immediate family members.

Marlins Park in Miami and Hard Rock Stadium in Miami Gardens, two popular ***COVID***-19 testing sites, are in the process of being converted into vaccination sites.

More drive-thru vaccination sites are coming to Broward County. On Thursday, former testing site Holiday Park and War Memorial in Fort Lauderdale will reopen as a ***vaccine*** site. On Friday, Central Broward Park and Broward County Stadium in Lauderhill will open. Appointments will be required.

Florida's governor announced Publix will administer about 15,000 doses of the Moderna ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** in 22 of its stores in Citrus, Hernando and Marion counties. No stores in South Florida yet.

Who can get ***COVID***-19 vaccines in Florida and who cannot? Do you need proof of residency?

Currently, Florida is giving vaccines to healthcare workers, long-term care facility residents and staff, and people 65 and older, including snowbirds. Florida does not plan to require teachers and students to get the ***vaccine***, even if one meant for children becomes available by next school year.

Florida does not have a statewide residency requirement to get the ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine***. This means if you live in Miami-Dade, you can get the ***vaccine*** in Broward or vice versa.

Who should not get a ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine***: People who have had a severe allergic reaction to ingredients in the ***vaccine*** or had a severe reaction after a previous dose. Ingredients of the Pfizer-BioNTech and the Moderna ***vaccine*** can be found on FDA.gov.

What ***COVID***-19 vaccines are available in Florida? How many doses do I need?

Florida has two vaccines available: Pfizer BioNTech and Moderna.

The Pfizer-BioNTech ***vaccine*** requires two shots, three weeks apart, and can be given to people 16 and older. Moderna's ***vaccine*** requires two shots, one month apart, and can be given to people 18 and older. Neither ***vaccine*** will give you ***COVID***-19.

The two vaccines are not interchangeable, however, which means that if your first shot was the Pfizer ***vaccine***, your second shot cannot be the Moderna ***vaccine***, according to the CDC.

Levine Cava: The demand for ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** is much greater than the supplyMiami-Dade Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** said on Jan. 5, 2020, that the demand for the ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** is much greater than the supply currently available.

***COVID***-19 vaccination sites in South Florida?

Publix will soon have vaccines available in three of Florida's 67 counties. None of the counties are in South Florida, which has been hit hardest during the pandemic. That might change in the future. Walgreens, CVS, Winn-Dixie, Walmart and other pharmacies will also eventually have vaccines in stock.

For now, here are your options in South Florida:

Miami-Dade County:

Miami-Dade County still does not have any drive-thru vaccination sites open. Marlins Park in Miami and Hard Rock Stadium in Miami Gardens, two popular ***COVID***-19 testing sites, are in the process of being converted into vaccination sites. There is no set opening date yet.

The county has a website, miamidade.gov/***vaccine***, where it plans to post updates on where seniors, and eventually the rest of the general public, will be able to find and schedule ***COVID***-19 vaccination appointments.

At the moment, there are just two places offering vaccines:

Mount Sinai Medical Center in Miami Beach is booking appointments for people 75 and older and will eventually lower it to 65. For more information, call 305-674-2312.

Jackson Health System, the county's public hospital network, has launched an online portal for people 65 and older to schedule ***vaccine*** appointments. All of its appointment slots are currently full, but the hospital plans to add more in the future. To check for available appointments, visit [*https://jhsmiami.org/comvac/*](https://jhsmiami.org/comvac/).

MIA\_05BROWARDCOVIDVACCINE\_CPJOn Sunday, Jan. 3, 2021, motorists line up for ***COVID***-19 vaccination shots for people who are 65 and older as site staffers assist them at Vista View Park in Davie, Florida.

Broward County:

The Florida Department of Health in Broward County has created a website to schedule ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** appointments. As of Monday morning, all of the appointment slots are full. The health department says it plans to add additional appointment slots in the coming weeks at [*https://browardcovidvaccine.com/*](https://browardcovidvaccine.com/).

The appointment-only ***vaccine*** sites you will find in the website above include:

Tradewinds Park, 3600 W Sample Rd., Coconut Creek -- open 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sunday through Thursday.

Vista View Park, 4001 SW 142nd Ave., Davie -- open 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sunday through Thursday.

Markham Park & Target Range, 16001 W State Road 84 in Sunrise -- open from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday

Holiday Park and War Memorial in Fort Lauderdale, a former ***COVID***-19 testing site, will reopen Thursday as a ***vaccine*** site.

On Friday, Central Broward Park and Broward County Stadium, 3700 NW 11th Place in Lauderhill, will open.

Broward Health, the hospital network, has all of its vaccination appointments full through February and is no longer accepting appointments for now.

Monroe County:

By next week, people in the Florida Keys who are 65 and older will be able to register online or by phone to receive the ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine***, the Florida Health Department in Monroe County said Wednesday.

But the department couldn't say when the vaccines will arrive.

So far, Monroe is reserving appointments only for healthcare professionals and people with special needs who are 65 over and are registered with Monroe County Emergency Management -- meaning they need special assistance during emergency evacuations and times when storm shelters are open.

For seniors in the general population, a website and phone number to schedule ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** appointments is still on hold.

**Load-Date:** January 7, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Jackson CEO predicts more than 1 million COVID vaccinations by May in Miami-Dade*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:61PC-2GM1-JC3J-X15H-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

January 5, 2021 Tuesday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** miami\_dade

**Length:** 819 words

**Byline:**  Douglas Hanks

Miami Herald

**Body**

Miami-Dade's overwhelmed ***COVID***-19 vaccination efforts should expand dramatically in the coming weeks, with almost every willing senior citizen vaccinated by early February and more than 1 million people receiving doses by May, the head of the county's public hospital system said Tuesday.

"That is the current plan today," Jackson Health CEO Carlos Migoya said during a Tuesday press conference with city and county leaders and healthcare administrators. "Depending on what the supply is ... we can make this shorter."

Migoya's bullish prediction captures just how far Miami-Dade has to go in the vaccination efforts. So far, about 30,000 doses have been administered countywide -- less than 3% of the 1.2 million people Migoya said he thinks can be vaccinated through the end of April.

The trajectory depends on national ***vaccine*** production, local healthcare staffing and capabilities, willingness of the general public to be injected, as well as the stream of supplies sent to Miami-Dade by the administration of Gov. Ron DeSantis, which controls Florida's ***vaccine*** distribution.

While the state has supplied vaccines to a string of drive-up vaccination sites at county parks in Broward County, Miami-Dade is still waiting for that phase of the vaccination process.

"We have heard loudly and clearly from our seniors that you are ready for the ***vaccine***," ***Daniella Levine Cava***, the county's mayor, said in the online news conference. "The demand is much larger than the supply."

Miami-Dade maintains a website with links to the few hospitals offering vaccination appointments to the public.

Computer access an issue for appointments

With most vaccination appointments offered online, Miami-Dade is urging residents aged 65 and over without Internet access to visit county libraries to reserve time slots on computers there.

Kionne McGhee, a county commissioner representing parts of South Miami-Dade, said he's dispatching four staff members to communities where computer access is spotty to offer use of county computers for booking.

"Phones are continuously ringing," he said. "Constituents are calling and inquiring about new appointment dates."

Vaccines coming to Hard Rock, Marlins Park

Levine Cava and Migoya said Tuesday the DeSantis administration is pursuing drive-up vaccinations at large state-run testing sites, including Hard Rock Stadium.

On Monday, DeSantis said he expected Jackson to help bring vaccinations to Marlins Park, a state-run site in Miami. The city's mayor, Francis Suarez, confirmed the news in a Twitter post after Tuesday's online news conference, writing "we are in the process of repurposing Marlins Park into a vaccination center, similar to the way it was converted into a testing site" in March.

In an interview, Suarez said he expected city first responders to staff the site and that the federal government would likely cover the cost.

Migoya said he expected Miami-Dade to meet all ***vaccine*** demand for people over the age of 64 by early February, and then begin opening up the process to the broader population.

With the DeSantis administration expected to double its ***vaccine*** supplies over the next two weeks or so, Migoya said he sees Miami-Dade vaccinating as many as 75,000 people a week by February.

1.2 million people vaccinated by May?

That would put Miami-Dade on track for about 1.2 million vaccinations by the end of April. Combined with the population protected from the virus by past infections -- there have been about 300,000 positive cases in Miami-Dade, according to state figures -- and Migoya said the county would be "close" to herd immunity by the time May arrives.

That's the umbrella term for enough people having immunity to a virus that it struggles to find other hosts for spreading -- a target typically pegged at 70%. With 2.7 million people in Miami-Dade, a 70% target would mean nearly 1.9 million people immune through infection or vaccination.

Migoya said he expected at least three state-run sites to open within 10 days, along with a wave of new vaccination options from local healthcare providers.

Florida's Department of Health said its Miami-Dade office plans to launch vaccination clinics as early as next week. That's also when Baptist Health, one of the county's largest private hospitals, expects to launch its own online vaccination registration for members of the public to match the one Jackson debuted on Tuesday.

Bo Boulenger, Baptist's chief operating officer, said the hospital system used its first wave of ***vaccine*** doses to vaccinate its front-line workers and doctors. Now it's expanding the effort to include physicians and staff outside the hospital, and to vulnerable Baptist patients undergoing treatment for cancer and other serious illnesses.

"We're receiving the ***vaccine*** continuously," he said. "As soon as they're delivered, we're getting them into people's arms."

Miami Herald staff writer Joey Flechas contributed to this report.

**Load-Date:** January 6, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Long lines, web mishap make for messy day of vaccinations for seniors at Jackson*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:61P7-PV11-DYJM-M497-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

January 5, 2021 Tuesday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** coronavirus

**Length:** 1101 words

**Byline:**  Samantha J. Gross, Ana Claudia Chacin and Michelle Marchante

Miami Herald

**Body**

***COVID vaccine*** distribution continued to be plagued in Miami Tuesday by long waits, confusing web portals and hours spent refreshing web pages as frustration mounted.

Miami-Dade County's Jackson Health System portal for ***vaccine*** appointments was full minutes after its official opening time of 11 a.m. Some seniors and their families reported they had been able to register for an appointment as early as 9 a.m., hours before the advertised launch time.

Users took to social media, sent email and made phone calls to complain that the site went live earlier than planned, leaving many without an appointment. And even for some who did get appointments for Tuesday afternoon, there was disappointment when they were told to come back the next day.

WPLG-Local 10's Glenna Milberg reported that Jackson security announced to people in a ***vaccine*** line at the Christine E. Lynn Rehabilitation Center in Miami that there had been "a glitch in the count," meaning there would not be enough vaccines for everyone who signed up.

In a video Milberg tweeted, a number of people in line yelled in protest.

WPLG jackson tweet

When asked by a Miami Herald reporter why people were being turned away, Jackson CEO Carlos Migoya at first insisted it hadn't happened.

"If you have anyone who has said that, I would like to know who that is," he said during a countywide virtual press conference. "We have not run out of ***vaccine***. We have taken everybody there and we have not turned anyone away from any of our lines. We have plenty of ***vaccine*** left."

Migoya later clarified, saying that Jackson workers were running out of time, not vaccines, and those in line weren't turned away, but were given the option to come back the following day.

Maria Kelly, 73, was one of the people hospital staff members tried to turn away Tuesday, but she stayed in line anyway and received the ***vaccine***.

"Getting in was really, really hard," she said in Spanish.

Kelly said she got to the rehab center where Jackson is offering the shots at about 2:30 p.m. for a 3:15 p.m. appointment that her son scheduled for her Tuesday morning. Before 3 p.m., she says hospital staff tried to cut off the line, but she and a few others decided to stay. She eventually received the ***vaccine*** and was out of the center around 5:15 p.m.

But many people were not so lucky. Those who waited until 11 a.m. -- when Jackson had said the portal for appointments would open for business -- found they were too late. The site had gone live by 9 a.m. and most of the appointments were already taken.

"Knowing that other providers have been overwhelmed by sudden spikes in calls or web traffic, we were able to launch our system slightly early," the spokeswoman wrote.

That explanation didn't help people like Dianne Walsh, 68, of Miami, who said she tried to schedule an appointment through Jackson Health's online portal for more than an hour without any luck.

She was able to get through the first part of the form, which requests the patient's name, date of birth, email and partial Social Security number.

"It's hard to be on these websites constantly when you have a job and are supposed to be working," Walsh said.

She also tried to get her 90-year-old mother an appointment in Broward County with no luck. Broward Health appointments also filled up within a day of becoming available last week, and slots are full through February. And on Monday, the Florida Department of Health in Broward County announced that it no longer had any appointments available for its drive-thru vaccination sites either.

And that demand for the ***vaccine*** was apparent at the new Jackson sites: the Christine E. Lynn Rehabilitation Center in Miami, the North Dade Health Center in Miami Gardens and the Jackson South Medical Center in Kendall.

On Tuesday, a message posted on Jackson's website said that more than 12,000 ***vaccine*** appointments had been booked. The sites will be open seven days a week, with an initial goal of vaccinating 2,000 seniors a day. Jackson spokeswoman Lidia Amoretti said additional appointment slots will open up as Jackson receives additional ***vaccine*** supplies.

New appointments for the week of Jan. 11 will be added, Jackson said, and anyone interested should continue to check Jackson's ***COVID***-19 web page throughout the coming days.

The ***vaccine*** being given through Jackson Health System is the Pfizer-BioNTech ***vaccine***, which requires two shots, three weeks apart.

The messy rollout comes a day after Gov. Ron DeSantis publicly put pressure on the hospitals to vaccinate as many people as possible, warning that those who didn't use up their portions of the state's allocation of doses risk a reduction in supply.

"If you have hospitals like Jackson that are meeting or exceeding their targets then we are going to send them more vaccines," he said. "If you have other hospitals who are sitting on it and not using it, then future distributions will be reduced accordingly."

New vaccination sites to come

With booked-up appointments at Jackson and other hospitals, including Mount Sinai Medical Center in Miami Beach and Memorial Healthcare System in Broward County, Miami-Dade County Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** confirmed at a county press conference Tuesday that drive-up vaccinations are coming to Hard Rock Stadium soon. Other sites will also offer vaccines, she said, though she did not disclose the names.

Miami Mayor Francis Suarez tweeted Tuesday afternoon that the city is in the process of repurposing Marlins Park into a vaccination center as well, similar to the way it was converted into a testing site.

In Miami Beach, Mount Sinai Medical Center CEO Steven Sonenreich said the system plans on adding two new ***vaccine*** distribution sites at the hospital's emergency rooms in Aventura and Hialeah. With the new sites, the hospital would be able to increase its ***vaccine*** distributions from 650 per day to 2,000.

Baptist Health, which has not begun distributing vaccines to the general public, will be announcing an online portal to make appointments soon. CEO Bo Boulenger said Tuesday that "***vaccine*** distribution of this magnitude is a complex process" but that plans will be shared "in the coming days."

Florida International University has also applied to be a ***COVID***-19 vaccination site in Miami-Dade County, a university official confirmed to the Miami Herald Tuesday afternoon.

Memorial Healthcare System is now offering the Pfizer-BioNTech version of the ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** to senior citizens at two locations in Broward County, while the county also opened a new appointment-only vaccination site Tuesday at Markham Park & Target Range, 16001 W. State Road 84 in Sunrise.

**Load-Date:** January 6, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*'Hey, we're in a pandemic': People seen partying all over Miami on the holiday weekend*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:61P1-RHJ1-DYJM-M2BX-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

January 4, 2021 Monday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** entertainment

**Length:** 685 words

**Byline:**  Madeleine Marr

Miami Herald

**Body**

***COVID***, who?

Partiers over the weekend appeared to forget that there was still a worldwide pandemic happening and that vaccines, though on the way, are painfully slow in coming.

Despite the extended 1 a.m. ***curfew*** on New Year's Eve announced by Miami-Dade Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava***, many people appeared to ignore it and the coronavirus risk to ring in the new year with some after-hours, eyebrow-raising fun.

While the more responsible stayed home, others were seen on social media maskless at clubs, drinking, dancing and basically doing what Miami is famous for, then documenting it with selfies.

tyga post

Celebrities like Tyga and his pal/collaborator Chris Brown as well as socialites were out in force, either being tagged, or actually posting for all to see on social media.

Sly Stallone just got 'vacation shamed' after pic in front of private jet in Florida

On Tyga's post, the rapper is seen on a stage with a mic with hardly dressed women (but wearing masks) surrounding Kylie Jenner's ex.

The rapper's Instagram fans couldn't resist commenting on the irony of the situation:

"Lol ***COVID*** party."

"Hope ya know ***covid*** ain't going away just because it's 2021."

"Hey, we're in a pandemic."

As per his Insta, erstwhile local producer Scott Storch was hanging out with Tyga, and Marshmello, who ironically is known for wearing a helmet ***mask***. The DJ is working with Brown and Tyga on the new song "Light it Up."

scott post

Los Angeles bon vivant Prince Fred was all over the place popping bottles.

Fred documented a brutal bout with ***COVID*** after traveling to Miami in July, and has told followers he has since tested positive for the antibodies. But according to the CDC, reinfections are still possible. Regardless, Prince Fred was tired from all the going out: On his most recent post, the movie producer was in Miami getting a vitamin-infused IV, thanking nightclub entrepreneur Chris Paciello (Joia Beach Club) for hooking him up, literally.

"It's unacceptable these parties keep happening in Miami-Dade, when we have new cases every day," a club promoter who wished to remain anonymous told the Miami Herald on Monday. "I am appalled that restaurants, bars, and clubs are not taking ***COVID*** seriously. The rise in cases and deaths is made worse by the influx of visitors coming from cities and states which have strict ***COVID*** measures, which make Miami their playground."

Rapper Nelly held a New Year's Eve concert inside the Fontainebleau Miami Beach hotel. The hotel paid for off-duty police to be present at the event, and police "confirmed there were no issues," a city spokeswoman said.

On Saturday, more of the same maskless, non social distancing nonsense, just during daylight hours. Beaches were jam-packed with residents and tourists, photographs on the Daily Mail showed.

Nightfall brought about the 24-hour closures of popular Miami Beach hangouts Palace, Clevelander South Beach Hotel and Bar and Caffe Milano for playing music above ambient levels, in violation of a local ***COVID*** order. The city's code officers also shut down Club Madonna and Miami Live for staying open past ***curfew***.

"The city's Phase 3 Opening Orders say that restaurants and other food service establishments are permitted to only ambient level music (or live entertainment), but the volume of such music (or live entertainment) shall not exceed the level of a normal conversation," the city spokeswoman wrote in an email.

Palace drag performer Tiffany Fantasia posted a video on Facebook accusing the city of closing the businesses due to the recent "bad publicity" the city has experienced due to parties in South Beach's entertainment district.

"Apparently they've been going down the line, shutting businesses down," Fantasia said.

While California has the worst diagnosis rate in the United States, Florida is hardly out of the hot zone.

The Sunshine State saw the most new ***COVID***-19 cases and residents tested ever over the New Year's holiday. The Florida Department of Health reported 31,518 new cases and 328,293 resident tests over the two-day period on Saturday.

Palace bar

Miami Herald reporter Martin Vassolo contributed to this report.

**Load-Date:** January 5, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*When will Miami-Dade get a drive-up site for COVID-19 vaccinations? Depends on supply*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:61P5-3801-DYJM-M2Y9-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

January 4, 2021 Monday

Copyright 2021 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** coronavirus

**Length:** 682 words

**Byline:**  Douglas Hanks

Miami Herald

**Body**

With Miami-Dade's early deliveries of ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** not enough to meet intense demand, county leaders see the coming week as opening up the process to a far larger set of people eligible for the doses.

The first test comes Tuesday when Jackson Health, the county-funded hospital system, launches a website aimed at booking 2,000 vaccination appointments per day -- slots reserved for people 65 and over, in compliance with state rules.

This week will also see Miami-Dade's county government expand distribution of its own supply of 5,000 ***vaccine*** doses, with injections planned for people 65 and over who either live in county housing complexes or are county employees.

There's also a chance Miami-Dade will get its first drive-up vaccination site soon, a welcome development for elected officials under pressure to show progress in a rollout that's already sparked fury from seniors elsewhere in Florida forced to wait hours for appointments and seeing registration websites melt down under intense demand.

"This is what I'm getting asked from everybody," said Danielle Cohen Higgins, Miami-Dade's newest county commissioner. "When am I getting vaccinated? How? Where?"

Miami-Dade's own ***vaccine*** supply of 5,000 Moderna doses was originally reserved for firefighters and paramedics of all ages in the county. Under the DeSantis administration's rules for ***vaccine*** distribution, healthcare workers and rescue workers were given priority for vaccines, followed by residents 65 and over.

But Miami-Dade administrators were caught off guard by the relatively low number of firefighters and paramedics interested in being vaccinated.

About 45% of the agency's employees surveyed said they weren't interested in being vaccinated early. As of Monday, Miami-Dade had only managed to administer fewer than 400 doses to willing participants in a department with more than 2,000 employees, county Communications Director Rachel Johnson said.

Now Miami-Dade is focusing on how to use the leftover ***vaccine*** for people 65 and over.

The county's housing agency has begun administering doses for homebound residents 65 and over. Of the 413 vaccines administered through Monday, 333 went to firefighters and paramedics and 80 to public-housing residents, Johnson said. After the homebound seniors have gotten their doses, the plan is to offer vaccination appointments to public-housing residents and Miami-Dade employees age 65 and over.

"We should be done by next week," Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** said. "That's our plan."

At a Jackson press conference on Monday, Gov. Ron DeSantis said the hospital is prepared to roll out vaccination services at sites currently used for ***COVID***-19 testing.

"They'll have an announcement hopefully very soon about doing some vaccination sites at other testing sites, like Marlins Park," DeSantis said, with Jackson CEO Carlos Migoya standing steps away. "It's not something that's going to happen overnight, but we think very soon you'll see Jackson working with the county and the state and have additional drive-up ***vaccine*** sites."

Broward County this week began taking appointments for three drive-up sites at county parks. The county said 4,000 people received vaccinations at the sites, provided by the state's local Department of Health office, and more than 26,000 appointments booked. Reservations are made through the website browardcovidvaccine.com.

Last week, Miami-Dade launched a website designed to be the clearing house for vaccination information. So far, the updates have been sparse. On Monday, there was a link to Mount Sinai's website and its vaccination appointment number for people 75 and older. And there was a preview of the appointment website Jackson plans to launch Tuesday at 11 a.m.

"People are very impatient. They're very anxious," Levine Cava said. "Honestly, thank goodness they want the ***vaccine***."

The ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** blitz is on in Miami-Dade. Leaders worry some will sit it outJackson is the second major hospital system to open ***COVID*** vaccinations to the public after inoculating front line healthcare workers, following Mount Sinai Medical Center.

**Load-Date:** January 5, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*You may want to forget 2020. Miami's history museum is making sure that you don't.*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:61MY-WM81-DYJM-M382-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

December 30, 2020 Wednesday

Copyright 2020 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** downtown\_miami

**Length:** 616 words

**Byline:**  Andres Viglucci

Miami Herald

**Body**

Most people may want to forget everything about 2020, but it's the HistoryMiami Museum's job to make sure that we don't.

And so the institution is launching a vox populi campaign to ensure that Miamians' particular experience of the defining events of this fateful and traumatic year -- the ***COVID***-19 pandemic, widespread demonstrations for racial justice and consequential local and national elections -- is amply documented and preserved for posterity.

HistoryMiami is soliciting the public's help. It's asking locals to contribute written or verbal accounts, photographs and artifacts or other memorabilia that tell the story of 2020 in their hometown.

MIA\_HISTORYMIAMI-COLLECTION2020-\_Local00160JAIA Miami Heat Jersey worn by Bam Adebayo during the 2020 NBA Finals was donated to the HistoryMiami Museum by the Miami Heat.

The museum's Collecting 2020 project is off to a good start. Several signal items are already in its hands, including Miami Heat star Bam Adebayo's Black Lives Matter game jersey, a series of election campaign posters and one of the first vials of coronavirus ***vaccine*** used at Jackson Memorial Hospital as inoculations began.

MIA\_HISTORYMIAMI-COLLECTION2020-\_Local00132JAIDaniel Uhlfelder, who walked around the beach dressed as the Grim Reaper, poses next to the costume he wore to warn beachgoers of the dangers of ***COVID***-19.

Also in the collection: the Grim Reaper costume worn by lawyer Daniel Uhlfelder as he toured Florida's beaches to warn the heedless about the deadly spread of the novel coronavirus.

The terrifying costume and its plastic but convincing-looking scythe, Uhlfelder said during the project's official launch on Wednesday, will be a reminder both of what he described as state government failures in combating and containing the pandemic in Florida, but also of the critical need for officials and institutions to provide accurate information even when the news is bad.

"We should not have to take such drastic measures to draw attention to this deadly pandemic," Uhlfelder said. "We should be able to speak truthfully about dangers we encounter and take them head on. We should not downplay them or sugarcoat them because we fear we cannot handle them. This is what has happened in this pandemic."

The 80-year-old museum, Miami-Dade Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** noted Wednesday, has long sought to portray the city's history, including "sometimes the very scary moments of our history," in an engaging way.

By focusing on Miamians' everyday experiences as a window into 2020, she said the resulting exhibit will highlight not just the year's troubles, but how Miami strove to overcome them.

"This year will be remembered for the ingenuity, resilience, compassion and creativity of all those who worked and sacrificed to protect our community from ***COVID***-19," Levine Cava said at the Cultural Center plaza downtown.

"This year will be remembered for the renewed fight for racial equality across the country. It will be remembered for record-breaking participation in our democracy. And it will be remembered for the ways as a community we stood and worked together in new ways to get through an unprecedented crisis."

MIA\_HISTORYMIAMI-COLLECTION2020-\_Local00170JAISome of the items that have already been donated on display at HistoryMiami Museum.

To contribute

HistoryMiami is making it easy to contribute stories and items. A link on its website ([*http://www.historymiami.org/collecting2020/*](http://www.historymiami.org/collecting2020/)) provides a format for written recollections or a verbal recording. Artifacts can be offered up for donation through a separate form on the web page.

The material collected will likely form the basis for a future exhibit, although no date has been set yet, the museum said.

**Load-Date:** December 30, 2020

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*The COVID-19 vaccine blitz is on in Miami-Dade. Leaders worry some will sit it out*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:61MY-7841-JC3J-X33H-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

December 30, 2020 Wednesday

Copyright 2020 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** coronavirus

**Length:** 1354 words

**Byline:**  Ben Conarck and Douglas Hanks

Miami Herald

**Body**

One of the first members of the public in Miami-Dade County to receive a ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine***, 81-year-old Patrick Range, has been working throughout the pandemic.

Range goes to work every day at the funeral home in Liberty City that his family has operated since 1953, a place that has seen its share of pandemic-related funerals over the past 10 months. He is the son of M. Athalie Range, a Bahamian-American woman and the first Black person to serve on the Miami city commission.

On Wednesday afternoon, Range was in line for a shot at the recently opened Christine E. Lynn Rehabilitation Center on Jackson Memorial Hospital's campus. Miami-Dade's public hospital system held the press event to help convince people to sign up for the two federally authorized ***COVID***-19 vaccines. The hospital said it plans to vaccinate more than 10,000 people in the coming weeks using a shipment of Pfizer-BioNTech ***vaccine*** doses that could arrive as soon as Thursday.

Dressed in a black suit and a striped purple tie, Range said he had a message for his Liberty City community, as he took off his jacket and rolled up his sleeve.

"Being in the funeral industry, I'm familiar with this virus," Range said. "Nothing from the vaccination can be as bad as this virus."

In the fluorescent-lit room where Range received his first dose, Miami musician Emilio Estefan of the Miami Sound Machine and Nat Moore of the Miami Dolphins had just received their ***COVID***-19 inoculations moments earlier.

Though he wasn't a celebrity, Range might have felt like one on Wednesday when his shot prompted a round of applause from healthcare workers and media assembled to watch.

"I've never been applauded before," he said.

Swaying the public

Health officials hope the event with Range, Moore and Estefan will sway a public that has responded to the unprecedentedly quick development of the vaccines with a mix of enthusiasm and skepticism.

That skepticism, termed "***vaccine*** hesitancy," is thought to be especially prominent in communities without much healthcare access -- the same types of neighborhoods served by Jackson.

Miami-Dade administrators said hesitancy about the ***vaccine*** is a concern as the county begins to step up use of its own limited supply. The 5,000 doses of the Moderna ***vaccine*** obtained from the state went first to the county's Fire Department under state guidelines that gave priority to some rescue workers.

Even among firefighters and paramedics, most of the department opted not to sign up for the first voluntary vaccinations. A survey of 1,367 Fire Department employees found just 37% said they were interested in a ***COVID***-19 vaccination right away, and 40% said they weren't interested at all. Another 22% said they were interested in getting a dose, but not right away.

"It's not that different from the regular population," said J.D. Patterson, the county's chief public safety officer, who oversees the Fire Department. "A lot of people in the country are reluctant to step up initially. That doesn't mean that won't change over time."

At the press conference, Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** said reluctance about the ***vaccine*** is a hurdle for the county's push to see the broader population inoculated. "Unfortunately, in the general public there hasn't been yet the enthusiasm for the ***vaccine*** we're seeing on the 65-plus category," she said.

Miami-Dade is using its 5,000 doses for firefighter and paramedics on the county payroll, and for fire department employees in cities across the county. From there, the plan is to administer doses to home-bound seniors living in county public housing. After that, Levine Cava said, the county will begin expanding vaccinations to vulnerable county workers aged 65 and over, such as police, jail officers and transit workers.

On Wednesday, the county also launched its vaccination website, miamidade.gov/***vaccine***, with links to some of the hospitals offering vaccinations to the general public.

Miami-Dade's Jackson, like other Florida hospitals, had to shift its strategies for reaching people this week. Last week, Gov. Ron DeSantis announced that the state would move from vaccinating healthcare workers to focus on seniors.

Dr. David Zambrana, executive vice president of hospital operations at Jackson, said the hospital network is planning a blitz of public service announcements and media interviews aimed at under-served communities in the coming weeks. He said that Jackson will also make inroads in those places by reaching out to its own patients, many of whom live in low-income neighborhoods.

"No organization other than Jackson cares more for the under-served," Zambrana said. "We're leveraging that part of our system as a mechanism for vaccination."

Zambrana said Jackson is also relying on its own employees, nearly 4,000 of whom have already received their first doses of the ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine***, to be ambassadors to the public.

Hospitals' abrupt pivot

Jackson is the second major hospital system in Miami-Dade to open ***COVID*** vaccinations to the public after inoculating front-line healthcare workers, following Mount Sinai Medical Center, which has been inundated with phone calls from older people and their loved ones desperately trying to set appointments as Florida's hastily constructed ***vaccine*** distribution program takes shape. In neighboring Broward County, Broward Health is also administering the shots and has similarly experienced overwhelming demand.

The pivot by South Florida hospitals from healthcare workers to seniors follows the directive from DeSantis a week ago -- an executive order that sidelined so-called "essential workers" until large swaths of Florida's over-65 residents and snowbirds get their shots.

Jackson will open up an online portal on Monday, which it had initially planned "for any Miami-Dade County resident age 65 and older to request a vaccination appointment."

But the hospital reversed course after Jared Moskowitz, director of the state's Division of Emergency Management in charge of distributing vaccines in Florida, reiterated on Wednesday that hospitals shouldn't be requiring proof of residency or considering it when scheduling appointments.

While there's nothing legally prohibiting Jackson from doling out the doses as it sees fit, a spokesperson said Jackson would abide by the state's guidance, meaning it will no longer make county residency a requirement for a ***vaccine*** appointment.

The third week of Florida's ***COVID vaccine*** rollout encountered some turbulence as hospitals and county offices of the Florida Department of Health began piecemeal efforts to reach out to the public as demand far outpaces the limited allotment of doses trickling to the state from the federal government.

Stephen Kissler, an immunology and infectious disease expert with Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, said that the haphazard nature of the rollout is to be expected, given how little time officials had to plan, and the overwhelming interest from seniors is "a good problem to have."

But Kissler said health officials and hospitals should move quickly to do more than just offering hotlines and online portals for people to sign up for appointments.

"It's complicated partly because of the way vaccines need to be stored," said Kissler, referring to the ultra-cold storage requirements for the Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna vaccines. "But that said, the outreach can still be done in a much more proactive way, and should be."

He said outreach will help address disparities in access to healthcare. The reason health officials want to get the ***vaccine*** out into the community rather than wait for the community to come to then, Kissler said, is because, like other health issues, inequities and disparities in how people fare largely rise out of swaths of the public not having regular access to healthcare.

"Certain people getting the ***vaccine*** later than others can really entrench those disparities," he said.

The ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** blitz is on in Miami-Dade. Leaders worry some will sit it outJackson is the second major hospital system to open ***COVID*** vaccinations to the public after inoculating front line healthcare workers, following Mount Sinai Medical Center.

**Load-Date:** December 31, 2020

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*'Very chaotic.' South Florida seniors scour local hospitals for COVID-19 vaccines*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:61MM-MK81-JC3J-X4HR-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

December 28, 2020 Monday

Copyright 2020 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** coronavirus

**Length:** 988 words

**Byline:**  Ben Conarck and Douglas Hanks

Miami Herald

**Body**

At Mount Sinai Medical Center, the phones have been ringing almost without stopping since the Miami Beach hospital announced Wednesday that it would follow a new directive from the Florida governor: Vaccinate senior citizens against ***COVID***-19.

Mount Sinai has been scheduling about 800 appointments a day -- except for Christmas Day -- starting with people over the age of 75. The appointments run through the next several weeks, with the hospital inoculating about 260 people per day on its campus overlooking Biscayne Bay.

The growing demand comes after Gov. Ron DeSantis announced last week during a visit to The Villages retirement community that the state would push to vaccinate seniors 65 and older ahead of essential workers. The first doses of the two federally authorized ***COVID***-19 vaccines arrived two weeks ago in Miami-Dade and Broward counties.

Previously, front-line healthcare workers had been the top priority in the state.

But on Monday, many seniors remained in the dark about how to get the shot, even as nearly 123,000 people in the state had received their first doses of the vaccines as of Sunday.

They weren't the only ones. Even Florida's dentists, a healthcare profession widely recognized to be high risk, lacked clear direction from the state on how to procure a ***vaccine*** for themselves and their staff members as of Monday.

The directive from the governor followed reports in the Miami Herald that hospitals were widely allowing administrative workers and virtually any employees who still physically worked in their facilities to obtain the ***vaccine***.

The shift in approach by the governor has led to distribution methods that vary by county and hospital. On Monday, seniors in Lee County on Florida's West Coast lined up for hours after officials there announced the shots would be given on a first-come, first-served basis.

Mount Sinai was the first hospital in South Florida to announce its shift toward seniors, but other large hospital systems in South Florida appear to be following suit, with Jackson Health System, Miami-Dade County's public hospital, planning to vaccinate the same age bracket in the coming weeks. Baptist Health of South Florida said it is similarly developing its own plans.

"Obviously there's a tremendous amount of demand," said Steve Sonenreich, CEO at Mount Sinai hospital. "We're trying to take that on and do that in as orderly a fashion as we possibly can."

Sonenreich said about 80 percent of the hospital's patients live outside Miami Beach, and "that statistic still holds up with this ***vaccine***." Mount Sinai did not have the total number of seniors vaccinated so far available on Monday. Appointments for the shots can be made by calling 305-674-2312.

Jackson, along with Memorial Healthcare System, the public hospital in South Broward, both received about 20,000 doses of the Pfizer-BioNTech ***vaccine***, sharing the bulk of it with other hospitals but retaining enough doses to vaccinate virtually all employees who wanted one.

Miami flash briefing player embed

Those decisions were made largely by the hospitals themselves, and before DeSantis expanded the state's first phase to include senior citizens and people with severe underlying conditions in the general public.

Dr. Stephen Fredd, an 87-year-old former regulator at the U.S. Food and Drug Administration now in Fort Lauderdale who raised concerns about a lack of clear strategy to vaccinate the public in late November, said he's had no luck getting an appointment through his hospital, Holy Cross Health. Fredd was one of many senior citizens who contacted the Herald to express his frustration with the lack of clarity on how to schedule an appointment.

"The situation that is going on is, as I feared, very chaotic," he said.

Dentists unclear about priority

The uncertainty Monday about ***vaccine*** availability extended to dentists.

The American Dental Association said Florida is one of the few states that hasn't clarified where in their priority list dentists fall, despite dentistry being widely recognized as a high-risk healthcare position.

But in response to a question from the Herald, a spokesperson for the Florida Division of Emergency Management in charge of ***vaccine*** distribution said dentists were included in the first phase and should contact their local hospitals about receiving a dose.

"Oral health is essential to a person's overall health," said Dr. Andrew Brown, president of the Florida Dental Association, in a statement. "Florida dentists are ready and willing to receive the ***vaccine*** to help ensure that patients throughout our state can continue to access dental care necessary for maintaining their oral health and preventing dental emergencies."

Health officials working out details in Miami-Dade

So far, Miami-Dade's county government isn't planning to convert ***COVID***-19 testing sites into vaccination centers. Rachel Johnson, communications director for Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava***, said Monday that the state's health agency plans to use clinics and healthcare facilities for immunizing the older residents that are next in line after healthcare workers and some first responders.

"The Department of Health is developing and launching the plan for vaccination of the general population age 65 and up. They are planning to launch vaccinations for that group at Miami-Dade DOH clinics and through other healthcare partners," Johnson said in an email.

The Miami-Dade offices of the health department told the Herald on Monday that, when they do open ***COVID***-19 vaccination clinics, appointments will be necessary.

Miami-Dade's Fire Department has a supply of vaccinations for firefighters and paramedics across the county, Levine Cava said in an interview over the weekend. "That is being administered directly by our fire department," Levine Cava said on WPLG's "This Week in South Florida." "After that, the county is going to focus on older people and vulnerable people until that ***vaccine*** is used up."

**Load-Date:** December 29, 2020

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*DeSantis finally met with Miami-Dade's new mayor to talk COVID. Here's what happened*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:61K4-V801-DYJM-M1YS-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

December 21, 2020 Monday

Copyright 2020 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** miami\_dade

**Length:** 653 words

**Byline:**  Aaron Leibowitz

Miami Herald

**Body**

Political leaders in Miami-Dade County have been frustrated in their attempts to get Gov. Ron DeSantis on the phone to talk about ***COVID***-19 in Florida's pandemic hot spot as cases continue to surge.

So when DeSantis came to Key Biscayne Monday to announce a joint effort with the county on Biscayne Bay restoration projects, Miami-Dade Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** seized the opportunity to meet for the first time with the governor, in person, to talk about the pandemic.

DeSantis, addressing the media in front of the lighthouse at Bill Baggs Cape Florida State Park, said he congratulated Levine Cava on her election last month and said he was "willing to work with [her] on whatever we can to help the county."

Levine Cava, who was elected in November, has joined city officials around the county in condemning a late September move by DeSantis to bar local governments from closing businesses or enforcing ***COVID*** fines. DeSantis seemed to acknowledge, as he has previously, that he won't budge on that.

"I told her that she ran on a certain platform, and she's gonna pursue that," DeSantis said. "If I don't agree with everything, I'm not gonna come nitpick on that. I'm gonna find examples where we can work together. So our door is always open."

Levine Cava also struck a conciliatory tone Monday, saying she had a "great conversation" with the governor.

"We covered a whole range of topics, including some of the ***COVID*** topics," she told the Miami Herald. "We're proceeding with the tools we have in our toolbox, including all the executive orders."

The county's ***COVID***-related executive orders, including its ***mask*** mandate, currently hold limited weight because of DeSantis' order preventing the collection of fines. Levine Cava said earlier this month that she still supports the issuing of ***mask*** citations with fines to be enforced once the governor's order is lifted.

But she said Monday that she is more focused on "what we've got right now, which is working well." That includes a countywide messaging campaign urging residents to wear masks.

DeSantis suggested one way the state can help Miami-Dade residents is by distributing ***COVID*** vaccines to long-term care facilities in the county. The state's health department is sending inoculation teams into long-term care facilities to vaccinate those at greatest risk of contracting ***COVID***-19.

"I told the mayor, if there's more facilities, if we can send more strike teams, we want to do that," DeSantis said. "We want to be helpful."

DeSantis said state officials expect to receive their first approximately 61,000 doses of the Moderna ***vaccine*** Monday, followed by over 300,000 doses Tuesday. He also said a second shipment of the Pfizer ***vaccine*** with about 120,000 doses was expected Monday or Tuesday.

The governor still hasn't met with Miami Mayor Francis Suarez, who was tasked by the Miami-Dade League of Cities in late November with stating the case to DeSantis for more local control over ***COVID*** enforcement efforts.

Suarez said last week that he has made unsuccessful "personal attempts" to contact the governor. "I've asked people who have acted as emissaries. It hasn't worked," he said.

DeSantis has emphatically opposed business closures, saying recently that, "if a local leader wants to put [people] out of work, you're damned right I'm hobbling them from doing that."

Despite asking for greater authority to enforce ***mask*** rules, Miami-Dade county and city leaders haven't pushed in recent weeks for business closures or for stricter capacity restrictions on indoor dining. Miami city regulators, however, have shut down some businesses that violate their rules, including the county's midnight ***curfew***.

The county has extended the ***curfew*** until 1 a.m. for Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve.

A recent White House task force report that DeSantis refused to release urged the state to limit indoor dining, lower capacity in bars and issue stronger policies around wearing masks.

**Load-Date:** December 21, 2020

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*You'll have to hurry home. Miami-Dade changes curfew for Christmas Eve, New Year's Eve.*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:61J8-YTX1-JC3J-X0V0-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

December 17, 2020 Thursday

Copyright 2020 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** miami\_dade

**Length:** 654 words

**Byline:**  Martin Vassolo, Samantha J. Gross and Douglas Hanks

Miami Herald

**Body**

Miami-Dade Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** announced Thursday that she would relax the county's midnight ***curfew*** on Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve, allowing residents to stay out until 1 a.m. for the holidays.

Levine Cava met with a handful of mayors and hospitality leaders during the week to discuss the plan to loosen the ***curfew***. During a meeting of the Miami-Dade County League of Cities, a group of municipal mayors voted to support Levine Cava's proposal, according to Richard Kuper, the executive director of the organization. There was no objection.

"We need to make sure we are keeping residents safe as they celebrate through encouraging social distancing, ***mask*** wearing and communicating about health behaviors," Levine Cava said during a video statement Thursday evening.

She said police would not stop people headed home after 1 a.m. but that officers would be "on the lookout" for post-***curfew*** gatherings.

Key West's mayor puts a 10 p.m. ***curfew*** on New Year's Eve. Will the red shoe still drop?

The announcement is Levine Cava's first change in ***COVID*** rules established under her predecessor, Carlos Gimenez. In a video address after the meeting with city mayors, Levine Cava linked the change to late-night church services, though those events were exempted in September by a Gimenez order allowing anyone leaving a religious event to be out past ***curfew***.

"For Christmas Eve, I will extend the ***curfew*** for 1 a.m., so residents can celebrate their traditions, like midnight Mass," she said.

Miami flash briefing player embed

Miami Beach asked for 2 a.m.

The county mayor was under pressure from Miami Beach to allow looser rules over the holidays, when celebrating the new year is a significant revenue generator for the county's hospitality industry. Levine Cava said county police wouldn't be stopping people on New Year's Eve "who are heading home safely, but they will be on the lookout for gatherings that extend past 1 a.m."

Miami Beach Mayor Dan Gelber, who attended the meeting and met with Levine Cava earlier this week, said he expected widespread violations of the midnight ***curfew*** during the two holidays.

"We need to be on the same page, so I commend the county mayor for coordinating this effort," he said.

The Miami Beach commission passed a resolution Dec. 9 urging Levine Cava to push back the ***curfew*** to 2 a.m. for Christmas Eve and the New Year's weekend.

"It's a win," said Commissioner Michael Góngora, who introduced the resolution. "It still maintains the spirit of the ***curfew*** while allowing people to enjoy the New Year's festivities."

The Florida Restaurant and Lodging Association broke the news Thursday in an email to members.

"This is wonderful news to receive to give everyone the ability to share the holidays with guests and patrons and a lovely and generous gesture from our new mayor. Bravo!" wrote Lynne Hernandez, the South Florida regional director of the group.

'Not time to let down our guard'

Pinecrest Mayor Joseph Corradino, who is vice chair of the county's League of Cities, said the public should not interpret the ***curfew*** change as a sign that ***COVID***-19 no longer poses a public-health risk.

"It's really not time to let down our guard, I think that's an overall message the mayor is trying to send," he said. "But let's not force people into bad decisions. The good actors will be good actors."

Corradino said leaders shouldn't give people the impression they can't attend religious services or gather with family for the holidays.

Key Biscayne Mayor Mike Davey, who was also on the League of Cities call, said he agreed with the decision to extend the ***curfew***.

"I think what they're trying to do is give some leeway for these two evenings for people going out to religious services or with family. They don't want those people to be out of compliance with the ***curfew***," he said. "There's got to be a little give in these things. I understand the intent behind it. I would rather people be realistic."

**Load-Date:** December 20, 2020

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Spending the holidays in South Beach during the pandemic? Here's what to know*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:61J6-8861-DYJM-M4V4-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

December 17, 2020 Thursday

Copyright 2020 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** miami\_beach

**Length:** 1215 words

**Byline:**  Michelle Marchante

Miami Herald

**Body**

Celebrating the holidays in South Beach this year?

***COVID***-19 has changed a lot of things and sometimes it can be hard to keep track of what's open, what's closed and what the "new normal" looks like.

Here's a guide to help you enjoy the Miami Beach life with your ***mask*** on:

Does Miami Beach have a ***curfew***? What about a ***mask*** mandate?

MIA\_LABOR\_WEEKEND\_DAV3.JPGMasked and unmasked people walk down Ocean Drive during Labor Day weekend in Miami Beach on Saturday, September 5, 2020.

Yes, it does. All of Miami-Dade County remains under ***curfew*** from midnight to 6 a.m. every day, including South Beach, Wynwood, Downtown Miami, and Little Havana.

On Christmas Eve and New Years' Eve, you can stay out until 1 a.m.

Miami-Dade Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** announced the ***curfew*** relaxation Thursday and said police will not stop people heading home after 1 a.m. but that officers will be "on the lookout" for post-***curfew*** gatherings.

The ***curfew*** relaxation comes about a week after Miami Beach officials asked the county to push back the city's ***curfew*** for Christmas Eve and the New Year's weekend.

As for masks, everyone is still required to wear one in public, both inside and outside, to help protect themselves and others from ***COVID***-19. A countywide ***mask*** mandate is still in place. Exceptions include children 2 and younger or people who may have trouble breathing because of a chronic preexisting health condition.

While you can be fined for not wearing a ***mask***, you won't have to pay it immediately. Officials have to wait for Gov. Ron DeSantis' executive order suspending ***mask*** fines, among other things, to expire before they can collect the money.

In Miami Beach, police will issue a citation only if the violator refuses to wear a ***mask*** that they provide to them. The citations will carry a $50 fine that will be collected once DeSantis' order expires (date still undetermined). Police will enforce the ***mask*** mandate in commercial corridors citywide.

Are the beaches open? What about clubs and bars?

MIA\_000WeatherCLODS.JPGNoah, 6, and his sister Chloe, 4, fly kites while enjoying the cool weather at South Pointe Beach on Thursday, December 10, 2020, in Miami Beach, Florida.

Yep. Beaches, clubs and bars are open. So are parks and other recreational venues in Miami-Dade like movie theaters, bowling alleys and gyms.

But nothing looks like it used to.

Masks must be worn on the dance floor in Miami-Dade nightclubs, including in Miami Beach. Sitting at the bar is prohibited.

And if you're going to the beach, make sure you have a ***mask*** with you. While beaches and parks are open for limited recreational activities, including swimming and running, you still need to stay at least six feet away from others. You also need to wear a ***mask*** when not in the water.

If there's a specific place you want to visit, call ahead to see if they are open and if their hours of operation have changed. Mango's Tropical Cafe, for example, a South Beach staple for nearly 30 years, remains closed during the pandemic.

Is there a bigger headache than parking in South Beach? We have some advice for you

Are Miami Beach restaurants open for indoor dining?

pinktaco.jpgPink Taco on Ocean Drive has set up tables on the street, like many South Beach restaurants there.

Yep, all restaurants in Miami-Dade are open for takeout, delivery and indoor dining. Many restaurants are also offering outside dining.

There are still some restrictions in place though. A maximum of six people are allowed to sit at a table together -- 10 if you live together. Since it's the holiday season, call the restaurant ahead of time to see if reservations are needed.

Getting around Miami Beach: Trolleys, parking and how much does it cost?

trolley.JPGMiami Beach's North Beach trolley.

Miami Beach's free trolley is not running during the pandemic but you can call a taxi, an Uber or a Lyft. You can also take a Metrobus, which has suspended fares and has routes that can take you across the county. Check routes at [*https://www.miamidade.gov/transportation-publicworks/routes.asp*](https://www.miamidade.gov/transportation-publicworks/routes.asp)

For those of you who plan to drive, Miami Beach has a lot of garages, lots and metered spots. Fair warning: Parking can get complicated, especially along Ocean Drive during holidays. Valet parking options in the city are also limited during the pandemic.

Garages are a good option if you hate parallel parking or don't want to worry about your meter expiring. It might even be cheaper.

The Parkmobile app is the only payment option for parking during the pandemic, according to the city. All public garages generally have a minimum daily rate of $2, a daily maximum rate of $20. Some garages have a $15 weekend/event flat rate. The parking garage on 42nd Street is the exception, with a maximum daily rate of $8.

Meter parking rates range from $1 an hour to $4 an hour, depending on the zone. There is no charge for ADA accessible parking at all on-street meters, surface lots and garages, according to the city of Miami Beach's website.

maskpic1.jpgA family strolls Lincoln Road in Miami Beach in masks, which are mandatory in Miami-Dade County.

If you plan to visit Lincoln Road, there are three public parking garages and 11 public parking lots within walking distance. Each lot charges $2 per hour, payable with the ParkMobile app.

The 17th Street and Pennsylvania Avenue garages are the closest to Lincoln Road's mall and do not have a maximum time limit.

Pro Tip: Miami Beach has a free "ParkMe" app (available for iPhone and Android) you can use to find parking near your destination. The app can show you parking availability in select lots and garages, as well as real-time information, including rates.

It also has a rate calculator feature you can use to estimate how much parking at a specific location will cost. All you have to do is select the location and plug in how many hours you expect to be in the city.

Hotels and Airbnbs in Miami Beach: How will ***COVID***-19 rules change my stay?

Every hotel has different policies but there are some standard ***COVID***-19 rules they need to follow in Miami-Dade County.

For example, only service animals are allowed to stay inside a hotel room, even if the hotel is pet-friendly. All guests must also wear a ***mask*** during their stay, except inside their hotel room and stay at least six feet away from others.

This includes during check-in at the lobby, while riding the elevator, and at any other "common space." You must also wear a ***mask*** at "common areas" outside of the hotel if social distancing is not possible. Employees must wear a ***mask*** at all times.

Staying at an Airbnb will also look different.

Just like at hotels, Airbnb says everyone must wear a ***mask***, including the host, and be at least six feet away from others at all times. The only exception is if everyone in the room is part of the same reservation.

Masks and social distancing are also required at all times during Airbnb Experiences, which are interactive in-person activities you can book across Florida, including in Miami Beach.

Airbnb has also banned all parties and events, including baby showers and birthday parties. Boutique hotels and other traditional hospitality venues listed on the platform are an exception.

Miami Herald staff writer Martin Vassolo contributed to this report.

Staying at an Airbnb for the holidays in Florida? There are ***COVID*** changes to know

**Load-Date:** December 18, 2020

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Miami-Dade mayors have a new COVID challenge: getting Gov. DeSantis on the phone*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:61J6-8861-DYJM-M4TS-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

December 17, 2020 Thursday

Copyright 2020 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** state\_politics

**Length:** 1512 words

**Byline:**  Joey Flechas, Samantha J. Gross, Martin Vassolo and Douglas Hanks

Miami Herald

**Body**

Ten months into fighting Florida's worst coronavirus outbreak, mayors in Miami-Dade County have a simple request for the state's governor: Call us.

Recent weeks saw city and county leaders confirm publicly they've been unable to talk to Gov. Ron DeSantis, who in September intervened in local ***COVID***-19 responses by barring local governments from closing businesses or enforcing ***COVID***-19 fines.

Mayors from some of South Florida's largest communities want more local control over rules meant to combat the spread of ***COVID***-19, including limiting business activity and issuing collectible fines for people who don't wear masks in public.

The message is the same from Vice President Mike Pence's White House Coronavirus Task Force all the way down to scientists crunching numbers for Miami City Hall: Stricter regulations can curb the spread of the virus, especially during a deadly holiday spike. But so far, Miami-Dade leaders have not been able to say this directly to DeSantis.

Miami-Dade Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava***, Miami Mayor Francis Suarez and other elected officials want more enforcement power as coronavirus infections surge. Suarez, who contracted ***COVID*** in March, and Levine Cava, who ended her quarantine Monday after contracting the virus, have both said they would use fines to stem the rising tide of infections. Suarez said Miami would look at limiting indoor capacity for businesses.

Miami Beach Mayor Dan Gelber, Hialeah Mayor Carlos Hernandez and others have called on DeSantis to allow ***mask*** mandates to be enforced. The Miami-Dade League of Cities tasked Suarez, the Republican mayor of the county's largest city, to make the case for more local control. The governor hasn't responded to meeting requests.

"I have made personal attempts, which have been unsuccessful," said Suarez. "I've asked people who have acted as emissaries. It hasn't worked."

Other leaders whose letters and calls to the governor have gone unanswered are frustrated they can't share their view from the ground and ask for more power to stem the surge of positive cases and hospitalizations.

DeSantis' office did not respond to multiple requests from the Miami Herald for comment on his lack of communication with Miami-Dade leaders.

Florida cases

Not every local mayor has had trouble communicating with DeSantis. Bal Harbour Mayor Gabriel Groisman, who is aware of the "tension" between some mayors and the state, spent his birthday Wednesday at the Governor's Mansion for a Hanukkah party.

Groisman said while he wishes his municipality could better enforce local ***COVID***-19 restrictions, local leaders have been inconsistent in their home-rule positions, vacillating between supporting local powers and requesting statewide mandates.

"I understand the governor's position," he said.

Some mayors say when they need to get a message to the governor, they can through intermediaries. Miami Lakes Mayor Manny Cid, a Republican in a largely conservative area, said he has had indirect access to the governor through Republican state legislators who represent the town. Sen. Manny Diaz Jr. and former Rep. Jose Oliva, who was the speaker of the House until his term in office expired last month, serve as unofficial liaisons.

Though DeSantis may not be returning mayors' calls, on Tuesday he emphasized his opposition to any closures during a press conference at the Okeechobee Steak House in West Palm Beach. He was there to reinforce his opposition to lockdowns and highlight employees who've kept working through the pandemic.

"If a local leader wants to put them out of work," DeSantis said, "you're damned right I'm hobbling them from doing that. If they want to shut down businesses, I'm going to stand in the way. I'm going to stand with these folks here because they have a right to make a living, and I don't think the government has a right to put these people out of work and not let them put food on the table for their family."

White House report differs

A White House task force report that DeSantis refused to release noted Florida's place compared to other states -- but it cautioned that "rankings are almost irrelevant as the entire country is surging." The Dec. 6 task force report was obtained and released this week by the Center for Public Integrity.

Meanwhile, the state health department is reporting about 2,000 new infections in Miami-Dade County a day, and about 100 people are hospitalized per day. The numbers are matching totals last seen during the summer ***COVID*** surge.

suarez\_***covid***\_masks\_slides

If he had the chance, Suarez said he would present DeSantis with analysis by Florida International University public health experts that shows positive ***COVID***-19 cases decreased within a month of Miami's mandating masks in public over the summer. The conclusion mirrors advice from the White House task force, which sent DeSantis a report urging the state to at least limit indoor dining, lower capacity in bars and and issue stronger policies around wearing masks.

Unable to enforce citations against individuals for not following ***mask*** rules, Miami city regulators have been shutting down businesses that violate their rules often. City officials shut down five businesses for 24 hours in the days after the midnight ***curfew*** went back into effect Dec. 10. Since July, the city has enforced one-day closures more than 200 times.

Gov. DeSantis holds coronavirus roundtable with Miami-Dade mayorsFlorida Gov. Ron DeSantis held a roundtable discussion with Miami-Dade County mayors on July 14, 2020, to discuss local response to the coronavirus pandemic.

Miami commissioners reinstated the ***curfew*** after Jackson Health System CEO Carlos Migoya told commissioners limiting late-night partying could help curb the spread of the virus. Televised news reports of bars and nightclubs crowded with ***mask***-less throngs also influenced the change.

Still, Gelber said local leaders are not seeking widespread closures. He said they just want some leeway and leadership from the governor.

"No one's talking about shutting the economy down," he said. "We just want people to wear masks so we can have an economy. The economy would benefit from a ***mask*** mandate or at least his voice encouraging ***mask*** usage."

whitehouseTF\_dec6\_report\_FL

Meeting with Levine Cava could happen soon

Levine Cava, elected in November to lead the state's most populous and economically important county, has yet to meet with the governor. People who have been in touch with DeSantis and Levine Cava both say a meeting is now in the works, with talks intensifying this week to get the two together. DeSantis was in South Florida briefly on Wednesday for an appearance in Pompano Beach for the first inoculations at a long-term care facility.

Johanna Cervone, Levine Cava's chief of staff, is in regular communication with her counterpart in Tallahassee, DeSantis' chief of staff Shane Strum, about the state's ***COVID*** response and vaccination plan. Those communications have included logistics for a meeting between mayor and governor, according to a pair of sources familiar with the exchanges.

DeSantis traveled twice to the Miami area to raise money for Levine Cava's mayoral opponent, then-commissioner Esteban "Steve" Bovo Jr. DeSantis didn't call with congratulations when Levine Cava, a Democrat, won.

At one point, Levine Cava reached out to DeSantis ally Rodney Barreto, owner of a Coral Gables lobbying firm and a restaurateur, about getting in touch with the governor.

"She knows I'm very close to the governor," said Barreto, a prominent GOP fundraiser. "She asked me to set them up together, and I'm working on that. I've spoken to the governor on that. The governor indicated that he looks forward to getting together with Mayor Cava. And we're working on it for the next time he's going to be in Miami."

The last time DeSantis was in Miami-Dade and met with mayors, he struck a decidedly different tone. At a roundtable discussion in July, he mainly listened to what they had to say and left the major decision-making to local governments. When the governor reversed course in September, Miami-Dade's leaders were miffed.

"That sent a bad message to Miami-Dade County and the local governments," said Joseph Corradino, Pinecrest mayor and vice president of the county's League of Cities.

On Tuesday, DeSantis himself suggested he might soon have trouble getting in touch with higher levels of government. The governor has been a firm ally of President Donald Trump. DeSantis said getting the White House on the phone might be harder when President-elect Joe Biden is sworn in.

"The president has been a hell of an ally for this state, I can tell you that," he said after a Florida Cabinet meeting. "It's funny, these hospitals are telling me -- because, you know, we have really supported them, if they needed something we got it to them -- and I was like, well, you know, I may not be a phone call away from getting everything done soon. So, it's unfortunate, I think, for Florida."

El Nuevo Herald staff writer Ana Claudia Chacin and Miami Herald staff writers Aaron Leibowitz and Ana Ceballos contributed to this report.

**Load-Date:** December 17, 2020

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*'Here we finally are.' First healthcare workers in Miami-Dade receive COVID-19 vaccine.*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:61HS-9W91-JC3J-X2XJ-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

December 15, 2020 Tuesday

Copyright 2020 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** coronavirus

**Length:** 1334 words

**Byline:**  Ben Conarck

Miami Herald

**Body**

Less than half a year removed from weathering one of the most drastic ***COVID***-19 surges in the country, front-line healthcare workers at Miami's public hospital system rolled up the sleeves of their scrubs on Tuesday and welcomed their first doses of a ***vaccine*** shown to be capable of keeping the novel coronavirus at bay.

The conference room inside Jackson Memorial Hospital, one of the most active South Florida hospitals during the pandemic, erupted in applause after Grace Meatley, a nurse in the intensive care unit, received Jackson's first dose of the Pfizer BioNTech ***vaccine***, which arrived at the health system Tuesday morning.

The joyous occasion was a marked departure from recent news conferences at the facility over the last 10 months that often warned of worsening statistics and dire illness.

"It's a big day," said Dr. David De La Zerda, the head of Jackson Memorial's intensive care unit who received the second dose, as he looked out across the room crowded with members of the media and healthcare workers. "Here we finally are."

MIA\_Pfizer\_***Vaccine***\_Jackson\_ (3)Syringes with the Pfizer BioNTech ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** at Jackson Memorial Hospital in Miami, Florida, on Tuesday, December 15, 2020.

But De La Zerda, who was the voice of the public hospital in some of its most challenging times this year, stressed that some of his colleagues' hardest days are ahead, especially with the ***vaccine*** not expected to reach the general public until spring next year at the earliest.

"I don't want people to have a false sense of security," he said.

After nine Jackson employees received their shots in the conference room, hospital leaders and physicians joined Miami-Dade Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** outside the Ryder Trauma Center on the Jackson Memorial campus. The mayor had a similar message to De La Zerda, reminding the public that more than 4,000 people had died from the novel illness "right here in Miami-Dade County."

"Getting complacent doesn't put ourselves out of the picture, it only puts us more at risk," said Levine Cava, who just emerged from her own quarantine period after contracting ***COVID***-19. "So the only way to keep our economy moving is to stop the spread of the disease by taking all the steps, wearing our masks, washing our hands and physical distancing."

Levine Cava's comments were underscored by a rough start to the week for ***COVID*** statistics in Miami-Dade, where the number of people being treated for ***COVID***-19 rose to 932, according to the state Agency for Healthcare Administration. Hospitalizations have risen sharply in recent days in South Florida and across the state, which had more than 5,100 people being treated for the illness on Tuesday afternoon.

The Florida Department of Health confirmed 9,411 additional cases of ***COVID***-19 statewide on Tuesday, 2,160 of them in Miami-Dade, with the percentage of tests coming back positive for newly tested people averaging 8.7% over the last two weeks.

MIA\_Pfizer\_***Vaccine***\_Jackson\_ (4)Environmental Service Worker Armando Acosta receives the Pfizer BioNTech ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** at Jackson Memorial Hospital in Miami, Florida, on Tuesday, December 15, 2020.

'We're calling this a glimmer of hope'

Jackson Health CEO Carlos Migoya addressed the question of ***vaccine*** hesitancy, with a survey at the healthcare system showing that just under half of eligible employees wanted to get the ***vaccine*** in the first phase. He said the nine employees who received their shots publicly on Tuesday would help build trust in the community to convince more people to get inoculated.

"I know many people out there are doubtful about what the ***vaccine*** will do," Migoya said. "We are hoping with this transparency that people feel more comfortable with what it is and we get out of the myths that are out there about the ***vaccine***."

Before the press conference, Migoya, who had a mild case of ***COVID***-19 in the early days of the pandemic, said he anticipated getting the Pfizer shot by the end of the week.

"I didn't want to be one of the first because I didn't want to hog it," Migoya said. "But I think it's important the public knows the ***vaccine*** is safe."

By 6:30 p.m., a Jackson spokesperson said the hospital system had inoculated more than 1,000 employees, five hours after starting.

MIA\_Pfizer\_***Vaccine***\_Jackson\_ (21)Grace Meatley, a nurse in the intensive care unit, speaks during a press conference outside of Jackson Memorial Hospital in Miami on Tuesday, December 15, 2020. The conference was held after Jackson Memorial Hospital administered doses of the Pfizer BioNTech ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** to its healthcare workers.

More than 150 hospitals in Florida to get the ***vaccine*** by next week

The inoculations at Jackson on Tuesday followed the first doses of the Pfizer ***vaccine*** being administered at Memorial Healthcare System's specialty pharmacy in Miramar on Monday. That hospital system anticipates using 7,000 doses of the ***vaccine*** for its front-line healthcare workers and other hospital staff.

By the end of next week, the number of hospitals that have administered the ***vaccine*** could grow from 5 to more than 150, according to Jared Moskowitz, head of the Florida agency in charge of distributing vaccines across the state.

Moskowitz based his projection on an expected 300,000 to 400,000 doses of another ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine***, manufactured by Moderna, which officials will use to vaccinate more front-line workers, first responders and residents of long-term care facilities.

MIA\_Pfizer\_***Vaccine***\_Jackson\_ (14)Environmental Service Worker Armando Acosta receives the Pfizer BioNTech ***COVID***-19 ***Vaccine*** at Jackson Memorial Hospital in Miami, Florida on Tuesday, December 15, 2020.

The plan hinges on the Moderna ***vaccine*** being authorized by federal officials on Friday and the rollout of all the doses going smoothly.

At a press conference Tuesday afternoon in West Palm Beach, Gov. Ron DeSantis said his administration is still waiting to hear from Pfizer on how many more doses of ***vaccine*** it can expect for the remainder of December. Florida was supposed to get 205,000 Pfizer doses next week and then 247,000 the week after that, the governor said.

"Those next two weeks shipments of Pfizer are on hold right now," said DeSantis. "We don't know whether we are going to get any or not. We are just going to have to wait."

DeSantis said the delay was due to a production issue with Pfizer.

"It has nothing to do with the federal government or nothing to do specifically with Florida," he said. "This is just what's happening nationwide."

MIA\_Pfizer\_***Vaccine***\_Jackson\_(2) (2)From left: Dr. Hansel Tookes, Environmental Service Worker Armando Acosta, Respiratory Therapist Elizabeth Plasencia, ***COVID*** unit nurse Yaimara Cruz and ICU Nurse Grace Meatley attend a press conference outside of Jackson Memorial Hospital in Miami, Florida, on Tuesday, December 15, 2020. The conference was held after Jackson Memorial Hospital administered the Pfizer BioNTech ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** to its healthcare workers.

'The beginning of the end'

Earlier on Tuesday, away from the cameras, Dr. Peter Paige, a senior administrator at Jackson and chief medical officer for the county under Levine Cava, said Miami-Dade still had a long way to go.

Paige anticipated it would be a huge logistical challenge not only to get all the ***vaccine*** doses needed to Miami-Dade, but also to get enough people to trust a ***vaccine*** that was produced in record time, more than four times faster than the next-fastest ***vaccine*** in history.

"It's been such a struggle this year that we're calling this a glimmer of hope," Paige said. "But the big issue here is we've got a few months left."

Dr. Hansel Tookes, a leader for equity in healthcare in Florida and assistant professor at the University of Miami who also works at Jackson, said he had "chills" multiple times on Tuesday, which he called "the beginning of the end of a nationwide and worldwide struggle."

"It's a historic moment for Miami," he said. "And I'm very hopeful for our future."

Miami Herald Tallahassee Bureau reporter Ana Ceballos contributed to this report.

**Load-Date:** December 16, 2020

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Vaccines arrive, locals defy DeSantis, and gov defends search of 'darling of the fever swamp'*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:61HG-CHS1-DYJM-M2XX-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

December 14, 2020 Monday

Copyright 2020 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** politics\_policy\_in\_sunshine\_state

**Length:** 1788 words

**Byline:**  Mary Ellen Klas

Newsletters |

**Body**

It's Monday, Dec. 14. Florida electors will deliver 29 votes to Donald Trump today for a symbolic victory in his national loss.

And freezer-packed vials of the ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** are making their way into ultracold freezers in Florida.

The first shots will be given to hospital workers and nursing home residents. It's a sign of hope in a bleak and chilling year that the end of the pandemic is in sight. But for most of us, little will change for several more months. That's the amount of time it will take to vaccinate 70-80% of Floridians, enough to resume normal life. Yet so many questions remain.

Broward and Pinellas first up: State health officials announced last week that Broward and Pinellas counties will each receive about 10,000 doses of the Pfizer BioNTech ***vaccine*** from the federal government within the next several days, the first in the state. Those doses will go first to 35 skilled nursing facilities and then teams of health professionals who will fan out to area skilled nursing facilities. Gov. Ron DeSantis said the state health department would receive 20,000 doses for the strike teams to bring to nursing homes. He offered no details about how the two counties were chosen or how the 35 facilities were selected.

Florida's new surge: Day by day, the number of positive ***COVID***-19 cases in Florida continues to rise at rates not seen since last summer. Saturday was the 10th straight day with new case totals at 10,000 or above. Thursday and Friday's highs were the highest since the surge in July. The trend slowed on Sunday, typically a slow day for positive case reports, when 8,958 new confirmed ***COVID***-19 cases were reported.

WH report says Florida needs action: A White House Coronavirus Task Force report about the state of the pandemic in Florida became public Saturday. It contradicts the governor's open-everything approach to the latest surge and urges him to take immediate action to slow the spread of the coronavirus by closing or severely limiting indoor dining, limiting capacity at bars and issuing stronger policies around ***mask*** wearing. The report, obtained by the Center for Public Integrity, is one in a series of weekly reports which the governor's office has refused to release to the public.

WHAT WE'RE WATCHING

Locals defy DeSantis: Local governments may have their hands tied by the governor's decision to strip them of their enforcement powers as it relates to coronavirus enforcement, but they are pushing back.

Dog parks and defiance: Although the governor let an executive order expire that allowed cities to meet virtually due to ***COVID***-19, some cities kept meeting virtually anyway. Others have arranged for hybrid meetings to keep a distance. Miami Beach, for example, moved its meetings to the city's convention center, where commissioners are separated by drapes and piping and communicate with each other via teleconference. And in North Bay Village, as temperatures dipped into the low 50s, officials avoided meeting indoors by gathering under a small open tent on a waterfront grassy knoll behind a local dog park.

Cities on board: Miami-Dade County's emergency order requires everyone in the county to wear a ***mask*** or face covering in public places. Last week, the Miami-Dade League of Cities endorsed the ordinance.

Citations resume: As reports continue that some nightlife establishments were operating with packed indoor spaces, few face masks, and virtually no social distancing, the Miami City Commission voted to allow its officials to enforce a countywide midnight ***curfew*** with fines to be collected after the governor lifts his order.

Late local messaging: After months of conflicting messages between local officials who want stronger ***mask*** mandates and a state government that doesn't, newly-elected Miami-Dade Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** said it was time for a new messaging campaign. DeSantis stripped cities and counties of their coronavirus enforcement powers in September, when he suspended the collection of fines for violating ***COVID***-19 orders and barred regulators from requiring any business to close to prevent coronavirus spread. Levine Cava last week revived the county's ***mask*** order but also unveiled a public-service campaign revolving around the motto "We Can Adapt. We Will Thrive."

WHAT WE'RE TALKING ABOUT

Whistleblower drama: Last week began with the controversial decision by the Florida Department of Law Enforcement to send four officers to the home of Rebekah Jones, the former Department of Health data analyst turned whistle-blower, with guns drawn to seize her computers. They suspected she had unauthorized access to the DOH emergency messaging system and sent an anonymous message last month urging her former colleagues to "be a hero" and "speak up" about the coronavirus.

Appointee resigns in protest: A day later, Ron Filipkowski, a Marine veteran, former state and federal prosecutor, and a lifelong Republican who was appointed to the 12th Circuit Judicial Nominating Commission by DeSantis, resigned after reviewing the search warrant affidavit the state used to seize Jones' phones and computers. The Sarasota lawyer called the governor's handling of the pandemic "reckless and irresponsible" and he said the broad search warrant was "using police powers" to intimidate "people who are trying to tell the truth."

Normal procedure or intimidation? Questions immediately were raised about whether the aggressive raid by state police matched the crime, or if the search was intended as intimidation to silence anyone else from coming forward. FDLE released 30 minutes of body camera footage of the more than 3-hour visit to show how officers behaved.

Fever swamps and raids: The week ended with DeSantis blasting Jones, and the media. "Just because you're a darling of some corners of the fever swamps, that does not exempt you from following the law,'' he said. When asked by a reporter about the incident, he challenged the description of it as "a raid" and said: "It was not a raid. They were serving valid process in accordance with the laws and Constitution of the United States and the state of Florida."

Inconsistent use of 'raid': In April 2018, DeSantis used the term "raid" to describe the execution of search warrants, when the FBI confiscated documents and computers at the home of Michael Cohen, the former attorney for President Donald Trump. DeSantis, who was then in Congress, appeared on the Fox Business Network's "Lou Dobbs Tonight" show and said: "Look how quick they are to go raid Michael Cohen's office when it suits them."

Lone Star state failed long shot: Florida Attorney General Ashley Moody joined a long shot lawsuit from the state of Texas last week that tried, and failed, to overturn President-elect Joe Biden's win in the 2020 presidential election. Miami Republican Rep. Mario Diaz-Balart also signed the brief in which the Texas attorney general claimed Georgia, Pennsylvania, Michigan and Wisconsin suffered from "voting irregularities" and asked the U.S. Supreme Court to intervene. The high court rejected the appeal late Friday, saying Texas did not have a "judicially cognizable interest in the manner" and dismissed the case as moot.

IMG\_9627.jpgFormer state Senate President Bill Galvano swore Miami Commissioner Alex Díaz de la Portilla into office on Dec. 7, 2019.

Galvano's new gig: Former state Senate President Bill Galvano has a new consulting contract. He's been hired as the city of Miami's new redistricting consultant, earning $10,000-a-month and up to $125,000 a year to redraw boundaries for municipal voter districts. Galvano, a Bradenton lawyer, led the Senate's redistricting effort during the protracted legal fights between 2012-2016, a fight that cost taxpayers more than $11 million, three special sessions, eight rulings from the Florida Supreme Court and an embarrassing admission that Republicans intentionally drew districts that favored incumbents and parties in violation of the state Constitution.

Dark money's failed gamble: The cruise industry faced an unprecedented challenge in November as Key West prepared to vote on three referendums that would drastically limit the number of cruise ships allowed to dock at the city's port. Rather than openly campaign against the measures, the industry employed a tactic increasingly used by powerful interests: It financed a dark money campaign and hid behind shady and deceitful mailers to influence the vote. The effort failed. Now, we're watching whether there will be repercussions.

Crackdown on shell companies: For a decade, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce fought an anti-corruption bill to stop anonymous shell companies from exploiting the South Florida real estate market for the illicit gold trade. Now, after acknowledging the practice harms local businesses too, the measure, which was drafted in response to Miami Herald reporting, is poised to become law.

Last one standing: The Miami-Dade County Commission filled its vacant seat last week with lawyer Danielle Cohen Higgins who was appointed to the post after commissioners opted not to consider the other six candidates, including former state legislator Frank Artiles. The seven candidates were applying for the South Miami-Dade seat left vacant by Levine Cava's election to mayor last month, but commissioners ended up nominating only Cohen Higgins.

Seeing things: North Florida Republican Congressman Matt Gaetz, who rarely sides with Democrats, last week voted with them on a measure to decriminalize marijuana. The vote to legalize marijuana and expunge federal marijuana convictions was real. Although it is unlikely to gain traction in the Republican-controlled U.S. Senate, it's a sign that bi-partisan agreement is still possible.

Herald's new exec editor: The Miami Herald's parent company named Monica R. Richardson its new executive editor of the Miami Herald, el Nuevo Herald and Bradenton Herald last week. Richardson, senior managing editor of the Atlanta Journal-Constitution, will be the first Black executive editor in the Herald's 117-year history.

Happy holidays! This is the last Politics and Policy in the Sunshine State newsletter until the New Year.

Stay well and we'd love to hear from you. Miami Herald Tallahassee Bureau Chief Mary Ellen Klas curated this newsletter. If you have any ideas or suggestions, please drop me a note at [*meklas@miamiherald.com*](mailto:meklas@miamiherald.com)

Stay safe all and remember, the Miami Herald needs your support if we are to continue to supply the meaningful local journalism you count on during these unprecedented times. To support vital reporting such as this, please consider a subscription for unlimited digital access.

Know someone who'd like to get this? Send this to a friend to receive our weekly newsletter on politics and policy.

**Load-Date:** December 14, 2020

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*As COVID-19 cases spike, Miami will enforce midnight curfew as of this weekend*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:61GT-TNB1-DYJM-M3PS-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

December 10, 2020 Thursday

Copyright 2020 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** coronavirus

**Length:** 943 words

**Byline:**  Joey Flechas and Ana Claudia Chacin

Miami Herald

**Body**

Miami city police will start enforcing a countywide midnight ***curfew*** this weekend after commissioners unanimously voted Thursday to follow the Miami-Dade rule while ***COVID***-19 cases spike.

City police, code enforcement staff and fire inspectors will immediately start educating business owners inside Miami city limits about the change before issuing citations over the weekend. Police Chief Jorge Colina said officers would start notifying people Thursday night and begin enforcement over the weekend, though he did not specify which day.

"So it'll start over the weekend, but certainly we're going to start going out there now to notify people that we're going to be enforcing," he told el Nuevo Herald.

Officials will be empowered to issue citations, but fines are not collectible because Gov. Ron DeSantis stripped local governments of most of their enforcement powers in September. Tickets do not have to be paid until after the governor lifts his order. Municipal leaders have said they could better control the virus if DeSantis allowed tougher enforcement.

Nevertheless, Miami commissioners heeded calls from public health officials and Miami-Dade Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** for a unified enforcement effort ahead of the holidays.

"I commend the city of Miami for its commitment to work in partnership with our county and municipalities to ensure the health and safety of our residents and businesses," Levine Cava said in a statement. "I am committed to working closely with all our city leaders, businesses, and health experts to keep our economy moving forward while also ensuring our residents remain healthy. To get through this crisis, we need to stand together as a united Miami-Dade community."

The Miami commission agreed to reverse its position on the ***curfew*** from Oct. 22, when it called off city police and code inspectors in an effort to give businesses some space after months of pandemic restrictions. The city initially backed off the ***curfew*** following an early court victory for Tootsie's strip club, which had challenged the restriction. Even after the matter was appealed and the ***curfew*** was revived, Miami held back on enforcement.

Commissioner Joe Carollo proposed the measure as coronavirus cases surge -- a trend that led Jackson Health System CEO Carlos Migoya to write a letter to Carollo urging the city to bring back the ***curfew***.

"The evidence for a ***curfew***'s impact is not necessarily as strong as the evidence for ***mask*** wearing, physical distancing and proper hand hygiene," Migoya wrote. "In our community, however, well-enforced curfews earlier this year did coincide with declines in the key measures of ***COVID***-19's spread."

migoya\_***curfew***\_letter

Carollo read the full letter during the meeting while urging his colleagues to heed Migoya's advice to try to stop hospitals from becoming overwhelmed.

"With winter upon us, the data is heading in the wrong direction: increased positivity, increased hospitalizations, increased demand for critical-care beds," Migoya wrote.

Carollo also pointed to videos of bustling bars and nightclubs from recent television news reports. For months, Carollo has resisted loosening restrictions on nightlife establishments in Miami for fear that allowing late-night partying at bars and clubs would foster the spread of ***COVID***-19.

"Look, none of us want to see us going back to mid-March where everything was closed down, because if the virus won't kill us, the economy will," Carollo said as he introduced his resolution. "But at the same time, when more than 99% of our businesses are complying and doing their best to keep us safe ... we cannot have a few ruin it for everybody."

miami\_taskforce\_closures\_julytodec10

The city has continued to punish some businesses with flagrant or repeated violations of ***COVID***-19 restrictions, enforcing one-day closures for violators with unmasked people on the dance floor, large parties at the same table, loud music and a lack of hand sanitizer. City records show more than 200 instances since July in which officials have closed businesses for violating ***curfew***, lack of social distancing or allowing patrons to go without face masks inside.

Still, some of Miami's nightlife establishments have been observed operating as if there were no pandemic -- packed indoor spaces with few face masks and virtually no social distancing. This week, WLTV Univision 23 reported on several nightclubs following few, if any, of the rules designed to curb the spread of ***COVID***-19.

Colina noted part of the issue when he told commissioners that off-duty officers were found ignoring obvious crowding and ***mask*** violations. He said he suspended off-duty work temporarily until the department could give clear direction on enforcement expectations.

"There were officers that were stationed at some of these establishments where enforcement was not happening," Colina said. "It isn't just that you prevent fights, robberies, break-ins, etc. No, every law, including emergency orders, applies."

Meanwhile, confirmed coronavirus cases continue to mount each day. Florida's Department of Health on Thursday confirmed 11,335 additional cases of ***COVID***-19 -- the most in in a single-day report since July. More than 2,200 of those cases are in Miami-Dade County. The two-week average positivity rate, a key indicator of ***COVID***'s spread in the community, was 8.8% in Miami-Dade.

Commissioners Manolo Reyes and Ken Russell both expressed sympathy for businesses who have suffered through the economic downturn during the pandemic. Reyes suggested lifting the ***curfew*** once the city's two-week positivity rate decreases. After Carollo suggested setting the threshold at 5.5%, the resolution passed unanimously.

**Load-Date:** December 11, 2020

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Can New Year's Eve survive COVID? Miami Beach wants a curfew break from the county*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:61GT-58M1-DYJM-M349-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

December 10, 2020 Thursday

Copyright 2020 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** miami\_beach

**Length:** 761 words

**Byline:**  Martin Vassolo

Miami Herald

**Body**

Less than 15 minutes after deciding that Miami Beach should remain in a state of emergency due to ***COVID***-19, the City Commission voted Wednesday night to request that Miami-Dade County push back its ***curfew*** to 2 a.m. for Christmas Eve and the New Year's weekend.

The reason? Struggling businesses and rule-abiding residents deserve a break for the holidays -- even if only for four days, said Commissioner Michael Góngora, who sponsored the resolution.

"I would go that route for that weekend because I think that our community needs to be able to recoup some money and people need to go out and hopefully have a little fun in a responsible way," he said.

Góngora, who is recovering from cancer, said he would stay home this year but wanted to make the request for "the rest of the world that's healthy and looking to celebrate the new year." The commission is asking Miami-Dade Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** to relax the midnight ***curfew*** countywide, which is in place to curb the spread of ***COVID***-19, for the following days: Dec. 24, and Dec. 31 to Jan. 2.

Mayor Dan Gelber, who opposed the request, stopped short of criticizing his colleagues for supporting the resolution. It passed with only Gelber voting against it. Commissioners Micky Steinberg and Ricky Arriola were not present for the vote.

"I didn't want to support telling the county mayor what she should do," Gelber said Thursday. "I'm going to support what she does because I think the disunity in the county has been unhealthy, literally and figuratively."

Gelber, who has been vocal in his support of ***COVID***-19 restrictions, accidentally voted in favor of the item before later explaining that he misunderstood its exact wording.

He criticized the city of Miami for refusing to enforce the ***curfew*** in recent months, which he said puts responsible business operators in Miami Beach at a disadvantage.

"I think the commission, understandably, is frustrated that our businesses have been at a disadvantage to the Miami businesses," Gelber said.

On Thursday, the Miami commission voted unanimously to begin enforcing the county ***curfew*** after directing police and code officers in October to stop enforcing it.

"This is about the health and safety of everyone," said Commissioner Joe Carollo, the sponsor of the resolution.

Gelber, who said he agreed with Miami's proposed "retreat," would not say whether he supported keeping the ***curfew*** at midnight for the New Year's weekend. He said he would urge the city to follow whatever Levine Cava decided.

"Navigating lives and livelihoods is a very hard thing, and I trust that she will do it thoughtfully," Gelber said.

Levine Cava's office issued a statement Thursday afternoon that didn't sound supportive of a looser ***curfew***.

In the statement, the mayor said "it's more critical than ever that we continue taking steps to keep ourselves and our community safe -- especially over the holiday period... The measures we have in place now are an important part of our protection plan to ensure we can move safely into the New Year together."

Commissioner Ricky Arriola, who has long criticized the lock-down approach to battling the virus, said Wednesday's vote will leave commissioners vulnerable to scrutiny from residents and business owners who may question why the city doesn't urge the county lift its ***curfew*** altogether.

"Everything is disingenuous, everything is politics," said Arriola. "This notion that 2 a.m. is more dangerous and more virus-friendly than 8 p.m. is silly, and it's just an example of politicians who know they don't have a lot of tools to fight the virus making it look like they've got tools."

Góngora proposed that the city stop enforcing the ***curfew*** for those four days if the county does not act on the commission's request.

"Regardless of what happens, I think we should come to some kind of agreement tonight as to what hours we will enforce or not enforce because our business community deserves an answer," he said during the meeting. "They need to know what's happening."

Gelber and other commissioners said they would not support openly violating the ***curfew***. Commissioner Steven Meiner, who said going against the county could be a "slippery slope," supported the request to temporarily relax the ***curfew*** countywide. He proposed including Dec. 24 for residents to attend midnight mass for Christmas.

"I would really like for the county mayor to allow us this," he said. "I think that would be great for our restaurants, and we're really talking about a couple of nights."

Miami Herald staff writers Joey Flechas and Doug Hanks contributed to this report

**Load-Date:** December 12, 2020

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Will mask citations pick up again in Miami-Dade? It may depend where you are*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:61GN-56G1-JC3J-X1T7-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

December 10, 2020 Thursday

Copyright 2020 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** miami\_dade

**Length:** 889 words

**Byline:**  Samantha J. Gross and Aaron Leibowitz

Miami Herald

**Body**

***COVID***-19 cases are on the rise in Miami-Dade County, and experts say another round of holiday travel could further exacerbate the spread of disease.

For local leaders, that means the pressure is on to keep cases stable in their cities to minimize the burden on hospitals and limit community spread. But their approaches on how to accomplish that goal still vary somewhat.

In a resolution passed unanimously Tuesday by the Miami-Dade County League of Cities, local leaders underscored their support of the county's emergency order requiring masks in public places but didn't include any language supporting civil citations for those who violate it.

League of Cities Vice President and Pinecrest Mayor Joe Corradino had told the Miami Herald late last week that the League of Cities planned to poll its 34 municipalities on their support for issuing citations for ***mask*** violations, even as Gov. Ron DeSantis prevents cities from collecting fines for violations of ***COVID***-19 orders.

At a press conference Tuesday to roll out a new messaging campaign to combat ***COVID***, Miami-Dade Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** said she wanted county police to start issuing citations again for people who refuse to wear a ***mask*** after being offered one by an officer.

County police issued zero ***mask*** citations in November, despite claims in late September by then-Mayor Carlos Gimenez that the county would keep issuing ***mask*** citations and pursue the $100 fines once the governor's collection freeze expired.

But instead of focusing on specific enforcement measures, the League of Cities decided to focus more broadly on support for the county's pro-***mask*** campaign. The resolution was a response to Levine Cava's messaging, Corradino said, and is meant to bring a "unified approach" to her goal of following up on enforcement methods and reminding people to do their part.

"Every municipality will deal with it in the way they see fit," said Corradino. "We all support the county mayor's thoughts that we need to continue with the ***mask*** ordinance."

The resolution says the League of Cities supports the county's emergency order, which requires everyone in Miami-Dade to wear a ***mask*** or face covering in public places unless they fall into one of the county's exceptions.

FILE-1696.docx

County mayor wants more ***COVID*** options

At her press conference Tuesday, Levine Cava acknowledged the county could use some stronger measures to combat a surge in cases.

"Fines would be nice," she said.

DeSantis stripped cities and counties of their most used enforcement powers in September, when he suspended the collection of fines for violating ***COVID***-19 orders and also banned any orders that kept businesses closed to prevent coronavirus spread.

That order forced Miami-Dade to reopen bars and nightclubs and put an effective cap on the county's issuing of ***mask*** citations.

Corradino noted that the ***mask*** ordinance never went away, and that while fines can't be collected until the state of emergency status is lifted, citations can still be issued.

The county's city managers association recently surveyed its members and found that, as of Dec. 2, most municipalities have some sort of mechanism in place to "ensure compliance." But only a handful said they were giving out citations on a second or third offense.

Miami Beach said during Thanksgiving week that its police would resume citations for those who flout the rules.

Key Biscayne to issue warnings

Key Biscayne officials also said this week that police would start issuing warnings and handing out masks to people who are not wearing face coverings in public places, followed by notices of violation for subsequent offenses.

"We want to show the police chief and his force that we support them in enforcing the ***mask*** mandate," Key Biscayne Mayor Mike Davey said. "I don't think it's asking people a lot to wear a facial covering when you're outside around other people."

Coral Gables seems to be taking a similar approach. "The city's emergency orders track the county's and allow for enforcement of the facial covering requirements by the imposition of a warning followed by a citation," reads the city's response to the survey. "Fines are being deferred for now."

But in quieter, residential cities including Pinecrest, officials say compliance is generally less of an issue.

"Since the order by the governor in September 2020, the Bay Harbor Islands Police Department has not issued any civil citations for ***mask*** violations," reads one response.

In Doral, officials reported that code compliance officers were handing out masks "on a proactive basis." But, they said, "we are not issuing citations for this."

Despite the efforts of local leaders like Levine Cava and Miami Mayor Francis Suarez, DeSantis hasn't budged. The League of Cities voted Nov. 25 to have Suarez make a presentation to the governor to show that the latest ***COVID*** surge in Miami-Dade has coincided with DeSantis' move to limit local authority in late September. But Suarez says DeSantis hasn't returned his calls.

The Republican-led Florida Legislature has also disregarded calls for a statewide ***mask*** mandate, which Democrats have pushed as a basic solution to slow the spread of the virus.

Republican Rep. Mike Caruso has also been outspoken on the issue, and recently told the Palm Beach Post he intends to push for a statewide ***mask*** mandate during the 2021 session.

**Load-Date:** December 10, 2020

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Miami Beach attorney named interim city manager, first openly gay city executive*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:61GG-GSP1-JC3J-X55N-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

December 9, 2020 Wednesday

Copyright 2020 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** miami\_beach

**Length:** 1038 words

**Byline:**  Martin Vassolo

Miami Herald

**Body**

Hailed as a "trusted adviser" to the Miami Beach Commission, City Attorney Raul Aguila was appointed interim city manager Wednesday.

Aguila, 58, will run the city government for the next several months while the city hunts for candidates to replace the outgoing Jimmy Morales, who will leave his job Friday to work in the administration of newly elected Miami-Dade County Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava***.

Aguila's appointment, which takes effect Saturday, was officially a unanimous vote. Commissioner Ricky Arriola motioned to appoint another candidate, Fire Chief Virgilio Fernandez, as his preferred choice. Commissioner Micky Steinberg initially indicated support for Fernandez but maintained she was open to all candidates. Both voted to appoint Aguila.

In all, five senior-level city employees applied for the temporary position as the city's top administrator.

Aguila's $314,908 base salary, which is more than Morales' $305,736 salary, will remain unchanged as Aguila switches jobs, a city spokeswoman said. When the city appoints a permanent manager, Aguila said he will return to his role as city attorney. In the meantime, Deputy City Attorney Rafael Paz has been promoted to city attorney.

Aguila is Miami Beach's first openly gay city manager, according to the city. His appointment means that five of the 10 city leaders and senior officials who sit on the City Commission dais are openly gay men. The others include Commissioners Michael Góngora and David Richardson, City Clerk Rafael Granado and Paz, the incoming city attorney.

"For the first time in [Miami Beach] history, we have an openly gay manager, city attorney and city clerk," Aguila said in a statement. "It's historic."

Aguila Raul 2150new4x (Head Shot).jpgMiami Beach City Attorney Raul Aguila was appointed interim city manager on Wednesday, Dec. 9, 2020. He will take over for outgoing City Manager Jimmy Morales.

Aguila, who enrolled in law school at 19, graduated from the University of Miami School of Law in 1985 after completing his undergraduate studies at Florida International University.

He joined the city's legal department in 1993 and has served under 6 different mayors, including the late Seymour Gelber and his son, current Mayor Dan Gelber. In 2014, Aguila was unanimously appointed city attorney after working for two decades as an assistant city attorney. Prior to his stint in Miami Beach, he briefly worked for Monroe County as an assistant county attorney.

He plans to retire as city attorney in March 2022 after his contract ends.

Commissioner Michael Góngora, who made the motion at Wednesday's meeting to appoint Aguila as interim city manager, said Aguila's experience working directly with commissioners on proposed legislation made him the ideal choice for the job.

"I made the motion to support Raul Aguila as interim city manager because our city needs stability at this time and someone with broad-based knowledge of how our city works to steer pending projects forward," Gongora said in a statement. "Raul has been with Miami Beach for over 28 years through six different mayors and is nearing the end of his distinguished career, and I believe him to be our best choice as interim manager."

Aguila will assume the emergency powers commissioners granted to Morales during his declared ***COVID***-19 state of emergency. Since March 12, Morales has used his unilateral decision-making authority to impose curfews, business closures and alcohol-sale restrictions. City law allows the manager to wield his emergency authority for a 72-hour period, but the commission has regularly extended Morales' powers.

Following Wednesday's vote, Aguila told commissioners that he would rely on public health experts to make policy decisions related to the pandemic. He also affirmed that he did not intend to apply for the permanent city manager position.

Assistant city managers Eric Carpenter and Alina Tejeda Hudak, and Chief Financial Officer John Woodruff, have said they will apply to replace Morales. The city is nearing an agreement with firm Ralph Andersen & Associates to conduct the city manager search.

City leaders expect the process to last about six months. Before Morales became city manager in 2013, interim City Manager Kathie Brooks served for about eight months.

"I hope to be able to leave things perhaps a little better even for our new manager so that he or she can hit the ground running," Aguila said. "I look forward to being able to go back to being city attorney but in the meantime there is work to be done, and I hope to be able to work with the team over there and meet with them as early as tomorrow to hit the ground running."

The other candidates for the interim position were Fernandez, Code Compliance Director Hernan Cardeno, Public Works Director Roy Coley and Assistant City Manager Mark Taxis.

Of all the candidates for the interim and permanent city manager position, Coley is the only one who lives in Miami Beach. Aguila lives in Coconut Grove and Morales lives in Coral Gables.

Arriola, who has been a frequent critic of the city's ***COVID*** restrictions, said he has "extremely high regard" for Aguila but supported Fernandez for the job because of his emergency-management experience. He said he deliberated until late Tuesday night about who to choose, but settled on Fernandez because navigating the pandemic with a ***vaccine*** around the corner is the "most urgent matter facing our city."

"I can make the case for any one of these candidates," he said.

Gelber, who said the city has an "embarrassment of riches" among its senior-level staff, said Aguila's understanding of city operations made him a sensible choice.

"He is a trusted adviser to the commission," Gelber said. "He's been on the dais, and he's watched all of the issues."

Miami Beach's form of government gives commissioners the authority to vote on policy decisions, but the city manager is responsible for carrying the laws out and running the city.

Morales, who recommended Fernandez or Taxis be appointed the interim manager, said Wednesday that Aguila knows more about Miami Beach than almost anyone in City Hall.

"I will make myself available at any time to assist. Phone calls, Zoom calls, I'm just across the bay," Morales said. "Not that Raul needs it."

**Load-Date:** December 9, 2020

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*With options limited, Miami-Dade tries a PR campaign to combat latest COVID spike*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:61GC-6WD1-JC3J-X4HS-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

December 8, 2020 Tuesday

Copyright 2020 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** miami\_dade

**Length:** 535 words

**Byline:**  Douglas Hanks

Miami Herald

**Body**

Miami-Dade has a new slogan for its ***COVID***-19 fight as the county government faces a third spike in cases without the enforcement tools it wielded during the prior two.

Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** unveiled the "We Can We Will" campaign at a press conference Tuesday where she also acknowledged the county could use some stronger measures to combat a surge in cases overlapping with the higher risks from indoor gatherings during the holiday season. "Fines would be nice," she said when asked what local powers she'd like Gov. Ron DeSantis to return to local governments during the pandemic.

DeSantis stripped cities and counties of their most used enforcement powers in September, when he suspended the collection of fines for violating ***COVID***-19 orders and barred regulators from requiring any business to close to prevent coronavirus spread. That decree forced Miami-Dade to reopen bars and nightclubs and all but ended the county's issuing of ***mask*** citations.

Miami-Dade's ***curfew***, now set at midnight, did survive the DeSantis order, though a Miami Gardens strip club briefly had it struck down before the county revived the ***curfew*** during an appeals court fight.

Levine Cava said Miami-Dade is reviving its ***mask*** enforcement this month but is also emphasizing the power of public relations in the county's latest ***COVID*** measure. Using county communications staff, her administration unveiled a public-service campaign revolving around the motto "We Can Adapt. We Will Thrive."

The materials feature people complying with ***COVID*** rules or heeding recommendations, such as a woman jogging with a ***mask*** on under the heading "Spend Time Safely Outdoors."

"We will celebrate our residents and businesses who are doing the right thing," Levine Cava said during the online press conference, which fell on her ninth day of isolation after she and her husband, a Coral Gables doctor, tested positive for ***COVID***-19 on Nov. 30.

we-can-we-will-generic.jpgA woman in a ***mask*** is featured in Miami-Dade's new "We Can We Will." campaign tied to safe behavior during the ***COVID***-19 pandemic. Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** unveiled the new campaign at a press conference Tuesday, Dec. 8, 2020.

Miami-Dade hospitals this week reported more than 800 patients with ***COVID***-19, roughly double from where hospitalizations were at the start of November. This is the third steady rise in ***COVID*** admissions in Miami-Dade, following one in the spring when hospitalizations peaked at under 700 and one in the summer when they crossed 2,000.

hospitalizations tweet

Elected Nov. 3 to lead Florida's largest local government, Levine Cava said she's been unable to speak to DeSantis about the state's role in slowing coronavirus spread in Florida's most active hot spot. Levine Cava and city mayors want DeSantis to back off his restrictions on local ***COVID*** powers and allow the Miami area to bring back tickets with fines for not wearing masks.

"United, we do have to send one message," Hialeah Mayor Carlos Hernández said during the press conference. "I wish we could get more help from the state. And maybe somewhere down the line we'll all have to unite...and make a statement. The mixed messages we're getting from the state, I think, are making our jobs harder."

**Load-Date:** December 8, 2020

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*COVID-19 live updates: Here's what to know in South Florida on December 8*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:61G7-W951-DYJM-M3VP-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

December 8, 2020 Tuesday

Copyright 2020 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** coronavirus

**Length:** 1489 words

**Byline:**  Howard Cohen

Miami Herald

**Body**

We're keeping track of the latest news regarding the coronavirus in South Florida and around the state. Check back for updates throughout the day.

Gov. DeSantis said no more virtual meetings. Some South Florida cities are doing it anyway

MIA\_DeSantis\_Presser\_MJO\_4Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis speaks during a press conference in Miramar on Wednesday, Sept. 9, 2020.Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis speaks during a press conference in Miramar on Wednesday, Sept. 9, 2020. DeSantis defended his appointment of Palm Beach County Judge Renatha Francis, who has been deemed unqualified by an unanimous court.

4:05 p.m.: More than a half-dozen cities in South Florida have continued to hold government meetings entirely online as ***COVID***-19 cases surge, even after Gov. Ron DeSantis let his executive order allowing virtual meetings expire Nov. 1 and suggested they were no longer permitted.

A handful of municipalities in Northeast Miami-Dade, including Aventura, Bal Harbour Village, Golden Beach, Indian Creek Village and Surfside, have issued emergency orders authorizing the continuation of virtual meetings. Several of those cities have seen officials and staff test positive for the virus in recent weeks.

Read the story here.

Florida adds 7,985 coronavirus cases -- and nearly 100 deaths

2:45 p.m.: Florida's Department of Health on Tuesday confirmed 7,985 additional cases of ***COVID***-19, bringing the state's known total to 1,073,770. Also, 96 new resident deaths were announced, bringing the statewide resident toll to 19,378.

Two new non-resident deaths were also announced, bringing the non-resident toll to 249.

Read the report here.

Food and running shoes distributions

11:55 a.m.: Though not specifically citing ***COVID***-19, it's no doubt the pandemic has accelerated needs in the community. So several giveaways in South Florida merit mention.

Running shoes, personal hygiene essentials

First, to help some of South Florida's homeless population during the holidays, longtime running friends Ibrahim Al-Rashid, Miami philanthropist and chairman of Limestone Asset Management, and Cobi Morales, co-founder of Miami running and walking shoe store iRun, team to offer "Holiday Steps for the Homeless."

Al-Rashid and Morales are donating up to 200 pairs of running shoes to those in need in Miami and Fort Lauderdale from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. Tuesday, Dec. 8.

The pair plan to visit various homeless populations in Miami's and Fort Lauderdale's urban core areas to deliver the shoes -- while practicing safe social distancing, according to spokespeople at Durée & Company.

Brands include Asics, New Balance, Hoka, On and Brooks, along with care packages filled with personal hygiene essentials.

"The year 2020 has brought many unforeseen challenges. It is more important than ever to look out for the most vulnerable among us," Al-Rashid said in a statement. "... I hope that our outreach reminds them that they are not forgotten. Cobi and I are humbled to continue this work during the holiday season."

Grab-and-go meal bundles for Broward school kids

Broward County Public Schools Food and Nutrition Services plans to distribute free curbside grab-and-go meal bundles on Dec. 15 and Dec. 17, the week prior to the holiday break.

The traditional grab-and-go meal bundles are available to all children 18 years and younger, regardless of eligibility status, according to Durée & Company.

All children - whether they're engaged in face-to-face learning, eLearning, and even if they don't attend a Broward County Public School - "are encouraged to take advantage of the free meals."

Meal bundles can be picked up from any BCPS elementary, middle or high school during the school's designated distribution time. Select BCPS high schools will also offer curbside grab-and-go meal bundle pickups from 4-5 p.m. for families with children doing face-to-face learning.

The following high schools will offer an additional meal pick-up option from 4-5 p.m. on the above dates: Boyd H. Anderson, Blanche Ely, Coconut Creek, Cooper City, Coral Glades, Coral Springs, Cypress Bay, Deerfield Beach, Dillard, Everglades, Charles W. Flanagan, Fort Lauderdale, Hallandale Magnet, Hollywood Hills, Marjory Stoneman Douglas, McArthur, Miramar, Monarch, Northeast, Piper, Plantation, South Broward, South Plantation, Stranahan, Taravella, West Broward and Western.

Children or their parents can pick up multiple meals at a time by walking or driving through the car or bus loop to reduce the risk of ***COVID***-19 exposure. If the child is not present, the USDA requires parents to provide identification for their child to pick up meals.

For information visit [*www.browardschools.com/food-service*](http://www.browardschools.com/food-service), call 211 or contact your nearest school for individual service times.

Canceled cruises. Here's how you can get a refund or future trip credit

US-NEWS-PORTOFMIAMI-CRUISES-2-MI.JPGCruisers disembark from the Carnival Sensation at PortMiami on Monday, March 9, 2020, one day after the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention advised all Americans to avoid cruise ships because they are dangerous for ***COVID***-19 spread.

11:10 a.m.: Passengers who have had trips canceled or postponed during the coronavirus pandemic by their cruise line can typically request a refund or receive cruise credits for a future trip. The credits don't last forever and some of the deadlines to use them or to request a refund are coming up.

Here's what Florida-based Carnival Corporation, Royal Caribbean Group, Norwegian Cruise Line Holdings & Disney Cruise Line say about ***COVID***-19 cancellations refunds & future cruise credits.

Read the story here.

UK gives 1st ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** to 90-year-old, then to Shakespeare

11 a.m.: A retired British shop clerk received the first shot in the country's ***COVID***-19 vaccination program Tuesday, the start of an unprecedented global immunization effort intended to offer a route out of a pandemic that has killed 1.5 million, The Associated Press reported.

Margaret Keenan, who turns 91 next week, got the shot at 6:31 a.m. on what public health officials have dubbed "V-Day." She was first in line at University Hospital Coventry, one of several hospitals around the country that are handling the initial phase of the United Kingdom's program. As luck would have it, the second injection went to a man named William Shakespeare, an 81-year-old who hails from Warwickshire, the county where the bard was born.

Read the story here

Police raid home of ***COVID*** data whistleblower

10:15 a.m.: The Florida Department of Law Enforcement on Monday raided the home of a former Department of Health data analyst who has been running an alternative web site to the state's ***COVID*** dashboard, alleging that she may have broken into a state email system and sent an unauthorized message to employees.

But Rebekah Jones, who was was fired from her job in May as the geographic information system manager for DOH's Division of Disease Control and Health Protection and who has since filed a whistleblower complaint against the state, denied having any role in the alleged intrusion into the state web site and instead said she believes Monday's action was intended to silence her.

Read the story here.

Coral Gables Mayor Raúl Valdes-Fauli and Hollywood state rep test positive

Valdes-FauliCoral Gables Mayor Raúl Valdes-FauliCoral Gables Mayor Raúl Valdés-Fauli has proposed a ban on semiautomatic rifles in the city.

10 a.m.: Coral Gables Mayor Raúl Valdes-Fauli, 77, has tested positive for ***COVID***-19.

So has Hollywood Democrat Marie Woodson, just elected to the Florida House of Representatives from Broward County's District 101.

Woodson announced Tuesday morning that she tested positive for ***COVID***-19 after tests revealed her husband, Bob Woodson, and adult children, Bradley Woodson and Kelly Woodson, had the novel coronavirus.

"Consequently, we are quarantining at home," read a statement from Woodson's office.

Marie Woodson fitted.jpegFlorida state representative Marie Woodson (D-Hollywood)

Local blog Gables Insider reported earlier that the Gables mayor tested positive after receiving his weekly test on Saturday, and was asymptomatic at the time. He received the positive test results Sunday.

Valdes-Fauli and Woodson are the latest of Miami's elected officials to have tested positive for the virus, including Miami-Dade County Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava***, former Miami-Dade County Mayor and U.S. Rep.-elect Carlos Gimenez and Miami Mayor Francis Suarez.

MIA\_1EdisonHighvsNorland110Miami Edison High School football coach Luther Campbell speaks to the team after defeating Miami Norland Senior High School at Traz Powell Stadium in Miami on Thursday, November 5, 2020.

Some South Florida celebs also recently announced they had tested positive. Among them, Luther "Luke" Campbell, who thinks he may have gotten it at a strip club party where people were not wearing masks, and Gloria Estefan, who thinks she may have gotten it at a restaurant and has since tested negative twice.

Read the Gables story here.

**Load-Date:** December 8, 2020

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*A grim COVID milestone, Frank Artiles reappears, and mayors plea for federal help*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:61G0-KDX1-DYJM-M1X3-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

December 7, 2020 Monday

Copyright 2020 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** politics\_policy\_in\_sunshine\_state

**Length:** 1550 words

**Byline:**  Mary Ellen Klas

Newsletters |

**Body**

It's Monday, Dec. 7 and Florida has hit a milestone. The Florida Department of Health confirmed last week that the known total of coronavirus cases in the state has surpassed 1 million. This week, we hit another one: the Food and Drug Administration will approve a ***vaccine*** and distribution is expected to start immediately.

The first deliveries of the much-awaited ***vaccine*** are expected to be "within 24 hours" after the FDA's decision. A federal advisory group has recommended that both healthcare personnel and residents of long-term care facilities will be given the first doses of the ***vaccine***.

Dec. 14 vote: And next Monday, a day that is normally inconsequential after an election, will mark another milestone. The U.S. Electoral College will meet to vote for the president and vice president of the United States. And while President Donald Trump has yet to concede, he has said that he would leave the White House if the Electoral College determines Joe Biden is the winner. Biden, who won 7 million more popular votes than Trump, is expected to be certified with 306 of the 270 Electoral College votes needed to win.

Georgia on the mind: Will that put an end to the conspiracy theories? Don't count on it. The answer lies just across the border in Georgia. Republicans need an engaged base of Trump supporters to turn out for the Jan. 5 elections for both Georgia U.S. Senate seats. If they fail, it would allow Democrats to control the chamber for the next two years, making it easier for Biden to push through his economic plans, health care and criminal justice reforms. That's why the political world is watching Georgia closely and Republicans are convinced they have to stoke the false "election rigged" narrative to keep the base enraged.

WHAT WE'RE TALKING ABOUT

Frank is Frank: Frank Artiles, the former GOP state senator from Miami, has emerged as the mastermind behind the questionable no-party candidate whose presence in the Miami state Senate race led to a recount and the ousting of incumbent Democrat Jose Javier Rodriguez. As results scrolled on the television screen at a Lake Mary bar where Sen. Jason Brodeur was holding his election night party, Artiles announced: "That is me, that was all me." Now, it will be up to the state attorney, who is investigating, to determine who recruited the third-party candidate, paid his filing fee, and arranged for the dark money funding of campaign mailers. They and elections officials will also sort out if "all me" was all clean.

Job interview: Meanwhile, today at noon Artiles joins six other applicants seeking appointment to the open seat on the Miami-Dade County Commission. The board will vote on who will be chosen to fill the commission seat vacated by ***Daniella Levine Cava***, who was elected mayor in November.

DeSantis blames 'vote dumps': At a gathering of Republican leaders at the Governor's Mansion on Saturday, Gov. Ron DeSantis boasted about Florida's election results to a crowd of supporters and repeated one of the president's baseless claims of vote fraud. "People can have confidence that this was done aboveboard and done right,'' the governor said. "We don't wait three weeks, and then you know change a winner with vote dumps and all this other stuff that you're seeing around."

GA-FLA flips: It wasn't long ago that the Florida and Georgia seemed destined for similar political fates. Then Stacey Abrams flipped the script and Georgia turned blue. Just two years ago, Abrams and Florida's Andrew Gillum, lost razor-thin races to Donald Trump-aligned Republicans. Democrats in both states picked up seats in key legislative races and anticipated more gains in 2020. But this year that changed. Here's why.

Surging cases: Meanwhile, Florida now ranks behind only California and Texas for the highest number of ***COVID*** cases in the nation. The surge is expected to last for several more weeks, according to officials at the state's major hospital networks. South Florida hospitals say they are cautiously optimistic they can continue to care for increasing numbers of ***COVID*** patients without scaling back non-emergency medical procedures.

'Up against the wall': However, hospitals are again warning about staffing shortages and Miami-Dade Mayor Daniella Levine has pleaded with county residents to wear masks, adhere to the ***curfew*** and get tested. "We are up against the wall," she said.

Pleading for aid: But time is running out for people without food, facing evictions, or forced to lose their businesses. A bi-partisan collection of South Florida elected officials spent Saturday morning at a food distribution site on Miami Beach and held a video press conference urging Congress to pass another ***COVID*** relief bill to provide economic aid for the jobless, hungry and distressed.

New mayor tests positive: Levine Cava, Miami's new mayor, attended the Saturday event virtually after she said she tested positive for ***COVID***-19 last week. She said her ***COVID*** case likely came from her husband, a doctor, who contracted the virus from exposure to a patient last week during a house call.

WHAT WE'RE WATCHING

Worst in nation ranking: In a finding likely to surprise no one, the U.S. Department of Labor reported last week that just 36% of Floridians who filed for benefits received their first payment within three weeks this year. That's a tardiness rate so pitiful that only Hawaii did worse.

Schools will remain online: Florida schools officials have conceded that the virus isn't abating as soon as they had hoped. Last week, the state released a new emergency order that keeps live, remote classes available as an option for the second semester of classes. Schools will be expected to continue face-to-face classes through the end of the school year, as the state previously required.

Economic case for statewide masking: New research on preventive measures for ***COVID***-19 found that ***mask*** mandates across the U.S. are not only effective at preventing new coronavirus infections, but they also "persistently" promote economic activity.

But if the mandates are only countywide, they actually can reduce spending because people interpret county-level ***mask*** mandates to mean that infection risks have increased in their neighborhood, and as a result they distance themselves more from others and spend less. But the study showed that where mandates are statewide, they spurred the economy while also reducing ***COVID***-19 case growth.

Except in Florida: Don't expect statewide ***mask*** mandates from this governor, however. Last week a reporter asked DeSantis to respond to requests from mayors to impose a statewide ***mask*** mandate. He evaded the question and instead talked about lockdowns, something no mayor in Florida is suggesting. "No lockdowns, no fines, no school closures,'' he said. "No one's losing their job because of a government dictate. Nobody's losing their livelihood to their business. That is totally off the table."

Them, not us: DeSantis talks about social distancing, but it's hard to find him leading by example. Here's a shot of his gathering at the Governor's Mansion on Saturday.

DeSantis mansion 1205.jpgGov. Ron DeSantis speaks to Republican supporters at a Dec. 5 reception at the Governor's Mansion in Tallahassee, Florida.

Working while sick: Coronavirus is infecting Hispanics at higher rates than whites, and a new report studied patient records and found some explanations. Hispanic adults were more likely to say they had essential jobs and kept working while sick, researchers found.

Working from home: According to a new survey, for those Floridians who can work from home, it appears they like it. Considering that the ***COVID***-19 pandemic has now lasted longer than the Miami Dolphins Super Bowl drought, that's saying something. But not every state is as enthusiastic about the home office as Florida.

Record Obamacare enrollments: Fueled by a new wave of uninsured people who have migrated from other states in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic, Florida is enrolling more people than ever for health insurance plans on the federal Affordable Care Act marketplace. In one month, more than 870,000 Floridians signed up, leading the country among the 36 states with exchanges.

Profit from pandemic: How did the banking industry make $18 billion from the Paycheck Protection Program without having to protect anyone's paycheck? By charging fees. Big ones.

Prison beatings: In a grim window into the tolerance level of officer-on-inmate violence at Florida prisons, the Miami Herald reported last week that a Florida corrections officer charged with the vicious fatal beating of an inmate had a long history of violent encounters with prisoners. Despite that, he managed to stay on the job for more than a year and a half.

We'd love to hear from you: Miami Herald Tallahassee Bureau Chief Mary Ellen Klas curated this newsletter. If you have any ideas or suggestions, please drop me a note at [*meklas@miamiherald.com*](mailto:meklas@miamiherald.com)

Stay safe all and remember, the Miami Herald needs your support if we are to continue to supply the meaningful local journalism you count on during these unprecedented times. To support vital reporting such as this, please consider a subscription for unlimited digital access.

Know someone who'd like to get this? Send this to a friend to receive our weekly newsletter on politics and policy.

**Load-Date:** December 7, 2020

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*'We are up against the wall.' Miami-Dade's new mayor sounds alarm on COVID surge.*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:61FH-B561-DYJM-M55N-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

December 4, 2020 Friday

Copyright 2020 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** coronavirus

**Length:** 1010 words

**Byline:**  Ben Conarck and Douglas Hanks

Miami Herald

**Body**

Joined by hospital executives warning of potential staff shortages, Miami-Dade Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** on Friday said the county needs residents to comply with ***COVID*** rules to avoid a health crisis as she and other leaders so far fail in efforts to get Florida's governor to allow a tougher local response.

Isolating at home with ***COVID*** herself, Levine Cava used the online press conference to draw attention to Miami-Dade's increasingly alarming coronavirus statistics and invited hospital CEOs to lay out why this surge promises to be harder than the ones that hit in the spring and summer.

"We are up against the wall," she said. "Given what we have in our tool box, we must, must have full cooperation with all of the precautions that we know work. We are not universally masking in our community today. We are not universally adhering to the ***curfew***. We are not taking full advantage of our testing capacity, which is really significant."

A nursing shortage in Miami-Dade?

When coronavirus cases strained hospital capacity in the summer, Miami-Dade stood out as one of the country's ***COVID*** hot spots and was able to hire temporary nurses from cities where the coronavirus pandemic remained mild. Now there's a national spread in cases as much of the country moves into the confined spaces of winter, Miami-Dade doesn't expect traveling nurses to be available in enough numbers to provide capacity needed for ***COVID*** overflow.

"We have at least 30 to 45 challenging days ahead of us," said Jackson Health System CEO Carlos Migoya, referring to the wave of ***COVID*** cases he's expecting in the next couple of weeks from Thanksgiving gatherings just ahead of a new round of get-togethers for Christmas and Hanukkah. "We can't afford to get back to the numbers we saw back in July. Because while we may have the beds, we don't have the staffing. The entire country is having high surges."

Screen Shot 2020-12-04 at 4.03.59 PMMiami-Dade Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava***, bottom left, leads a press conference Friday, Dec. 4, 2020, on the rising ***COVID***-19 risk in the county.

***COVID*** hospitalizations are up 40% from two weeks ago, and about one in 10 ***COVID*** tests are coming back positive each day, according to the latest county statistics. The county's "positivity" rate was just 6% a month ago, and the increase is a sign of community spread.

Miami-Dade mayor can't reach Florida's governor

Levine Cava, a Democrat elected Nov. 3 to a non-partisan post, said she still hasn't been able to get Gov. Ron DeSantis on the phone for a discussion about how his administration could help Florida's most populous county deal with the state's most intense ***COVID*** outbreak.

"My office has reached out, and we have had a communication with a member of the governor's staff," Levine Cava said between coughs, part of what she described as mild ***COVID*** symptoms since her Monday diagnosis. "But I have not personally had the opportunity to speak to the governor."

A Sept. 25 order by DeSantis upended much of Miami-Dade's ***COVID*** plan in place under then-mayor Carlos Gimenez. The directive limited local ***COVID*** restrictions, forcing Miami-Dade to reopen bars and nightclubs, and stop collecting fines tied to a countywide ***mask*** mandate and a midnight ***curfew***.

Both restrictions remain in place, and fines can still be collected against businesses that violate the rules. But the effective end of fines for individuals brought a sharp drop in ***mask*** violations; Miami-Dade police said its officers didn't write a single ***mask*** ticket to a person in November. Local leaders say the decline in ***mask*** enforcement has led to less ***mask*** wearing.

"I have seniors who feel trapped in their homes," said Mike Davey, mayor of Key Biscayne. "Because they'll go out for a short walk, and see people without masks."

Levine Cava said the county is planning a renewed enforcement push with cities to enforce the ***curfew*** and ***mask*** rules "diligently" -- issuing tickets even if fines are suspended. Miami-Dade police also will be issuing masks to people found not wearing them, she said.

At Levine Cava's request, the League of Cities is asking members to join in a countywide enforcement effort ahead of the holidays, said Joseph Corradino, the Pinecrest mayor who heads the advocacy group for city governments. "The consensus was for everyone to be consistent," Corradino said.

Even so, Miami still plans to ignore the county ***curfew***, which is in place inside city limits. Miami City Manager Art Noriega -- another public official who is quarantined with ***COVID*** -- said a resolution passed by city commissioners in October prohibits Miami police from enforcing the county ***curfew***.

"That would have to be amended by the commission," Noriega told the Miami Herald. He said commissioners might discuss the issue at the Dec. 10 commission meeting.

For now, Corradino said the League has shelved a plan to write DeSantis directly to ask that he allow local governments to be more aggressive in the ***COVID*** response. "The consensus was there's really no point, since there are no plans to shut things down," he said.

At the press conference, Levine Cava said she and city mayors would be making an "appeal" to DeSantis "that local control be granted" if ***COVID*** spread continues to accelerate in Miami-Dade.

The press conference included top executives from hospitals in Miami-Dade, as well as government leaders from the Florida Keys to Palm Beach County. Levine Cava said she's pushing for the region to speak with "one voice" about ***COVID***, and Miami-Dade will roll out a new advertising campaign next week to reinforce the message. Friday's theme was relief remains on the horizon from new vaccines heading to Miami and beyond, but residents must stick with severe measures now to get through a dangerous spread of the virus.

"The best thing we can do is postpone all travel over the holidays," said Dr. Peter Paige, a Jackson administrator who also serves as Levine Cava's chief medical officer. "My plea at this point is: We really need the public to do its part."

Miami Herald staff writer Joey Flechas contributed to this report.

**Load-Date:** December 4, 2020

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*How Miami-Dade became the COVID epicenter of Florida and what happened month-by-month*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:61F6-1BS1-DYJM-M2K5-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

December 3, 2020 Thursday

Copyright 2020 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** coronavirus

**Length:** 2646 words

**Byline:**  Devoun Cetoute

Miami Herald

**Body**

Miami-Dade County has been the epicenter of the novel coronavirus in Florida, its 230,000-plus ***COVID***-19 cases accounting for more than one-fifth of the state's one million tally.

As of Dec. 2, Miami-Dade recorded more cases than 27 states, including Massachusetts and Washington, whose populations are more than double that of the county, according to the New York Times' national coronavirus database. The county's 3,860 deaths are higher than the death tolls in 29 states.

Here's a look at some of the key milestones over the nine months the county has been contending with the coronavirus:

106 MARLINS TESTING SITE DS.jpgMiami-Dade County Mayor Carlos Gimenez talks to the media during press conference at the ***COVID***-19 drive-thru testing center at Marlins Park as the coronavirus pandemic continues on Tuesday, March 24, 2020 in Miami. Marlins Park opens Wednesday for drive-through testing of people 65 and over with coronavirus symptoms. Appointments are required through a Miami-Dade hotline. About 300 ***COVID***-19 tests are available each day.

March: 0 to 2,123 cases; 0 to 7 deaths

Shutdowns and new safety measures to prevent the spread of the novel coronavirus in Miami-Dade started as a slow trickle, then suddenly escalated into a rush.

In March, Miami-Dade saw its first 2,123 cases and seven deaths. That led to a ***shutdown*** of businesses and public places in the county by month's end.

On March 12, Miami-Dade Mayor Carlos Gimenez declared a state of emergency as the county faced its first discovered case of ***COVID***-19. This came after Gov. Ron DeSantis declared a state of emergency in Florida on March 9.

On March 17, Gimenez ordered restaurants, movie theaters, playhouses, nightclubs and general gathering places to close unless providing pickup or delivery food options.

On March 19, all parks, beaches and recreational facilities in the county were ordered to close.

On March 24, Miami-Dade residents were told not to gather in groups of 10 or more in public spaces.

On March 26, Gimenez issued the "Safer at Home" order, which urged residents to remain at home as much as possible.

On March 27, Israel Carrera, 40, was identified as the first to die from ***COVID***-19 in Miami-Dade. It was believed that he contracted the virus while at the Winter Party Festival, which took place March 4-10. It was later found that 38 men became sick at the event. Many of them tested positive for the coronavirus.

103 Feeding South Florida DS.jpgHialeah Gardens Department of Parks & Recreation employees loading up food and vegetables to hundreds of cars lined up for hours early at Mater Academy as the Novel Coronavirus pandemic continues on Thursday, April 16, 2020 in Hialeah Gardens. The food giveaway was coordinated by Hialeah Gardens who teamed up with Feeding South Florida Miami-Dade.

April: 2,416 to 12,063 cases; 11 to 352 deaths

Despite the ***shutdown*** of nonessential businesses, escalating safety measures and the state and county's ***stay-at-home*** orders, Miami-Dade saw cases and deaths skyrocket from March, with 9,647 more cases and 341 new deaths reported in April.

Even with rising numbers, the county took its first steps toward reopening toward the end of the month.

On April 1, Gimenez ordered all adult daycare centers in Miami-Dade to close by the weekend, having already closed senior centers. Gov. DeSantis followed Gimenez lead by issuing a statewide ***stay-at-home*** order limiting essential services.

On April 4, the Broward Sheriff's Office announced that Deputy Shannon Bennett had died from ***COVID***-19, the first South Florida law enforcement officer to succomb to the disease.

On April 11, organizers of the Winter Party Festival said 38 attendees had become sick and some had tested positive. Israel Carrera and volunteer Ron Rich died from ***COVID***-19 after attending the event.

On April 15, Miami-Dade County Public School Superintendent Alberto Carvalho said reopening schools in the 2019-2020 school year is "not unlikely but imprudent." The Florida Department of Education's timeline included the return of students to school by May 1.

On April 30, Miami Beach police said they had already issued 652 warnings to people for not wearing masks at recreational spaces.

MIA\_80038CORONA0518MIAOPEN1CTJ.JPGBusinesses are reopening in Miami-Dade, and the county is offering $5 million in forgivable loans tied to retaining jobs.

May: 12,389 to 18,000 cases; 358 to 700 deaths

Miami-Dade saw a fewer new monthly cases reported in May than April, with only 5,611 more reported. But deaths still trended up, increasing by 342. Aside from March, this would be the lowest monthly increase in new cases.

On May 1, the DeSantis administration released information about coronavirus fatalities at long-term care facilities after more than a month of refusing to make the data public. News organizations sued to get the data, which showed that nursing homes and assisted living facilities accounted for 1 in 3 coronavirus deaths. South Florida accounted for nearly half of all deaths at elder-care facilities.

On May 13, Gimenez released "The New Normal" reopening plan, a color-coded system designed to track the county's restrictions. When released, the county was in the orange phase, meaning parks and opens spaces were allowed to reopen. That happened in April. The county looked forward to entering the yellow phase in a few days, which meant limited openings of businesses.

On May 18, a majority of businesses classified as nonessential reopened to the public after being forced to close for nearly two months. Businesses not approved to reopen included hotels, bars, pubs, nightclubs, gyms, movie theaters and massage parlors.

On May 31, Gimenez went back on his order of reopening Miami-Dade beaches on June 1 due to vandalism, theft and damaged storefronts in downtown Miami on May 30 from a peaceful protest that turned violent.

MIA\_102Covidtesting25NEWPPP.JPGLong Lines are seen outside of the Hard Rock Stadium test site on Thursday, June 25, 2020, as coronavirus numbers surge in Miami-Dade County.

June: 18,139 to 36,820 cases; 702 to 991 deaths

June ushered in another wave of reopenings and built hope of returning to normal. But growing virus cases and deaths toward the end of the month began scaring some businesses into closing again.

There were 18,681 more cases and 289 new deaths in the month. June's final days broke records for daily case increases, which was foretelling of what was to come in July.

On June 1, Miami-Dade hotels and motels were allowed to reopen after a two-month ***shutdown***. As with all other reopening, this one came with strict new safety guidelines.

On June 5, Florida entered the second of its three-phase reopening plan. This allowed for bars, movie theaters, tattoo shops, massage parlors and tanning salons to open at 50% indoor capacity. Miami-Dade, Broward and Palm Beach counties were not included in this phase and were not allowed to reopen many any of these businesses.

On June 8, Miami-Dade moved into its Green and Blue Flag phases. This meant gyms, tattoo shops, massage parlors, dog parks, summer camps, short-term vacation rentals and libraries could reopen. The newest batch of reopened places still had to follow strict virus safety rules, including mandatory masks and social distancing.

On June 10, Miami-Dade beaches were allowed to reopen after being closed for nearly three months. Beaches had been scheduled to reopen June 1, but that was delayed due to a ***curfew*** Gimenez imposed in response to anti-police brutality protests in downtown Miami.

On June 11, many casinos in Miami-Dade reopened their doors, including Casino Miami, Hialeah Park Racing and Casino, and Magic City Casino. Arcades, museums, movie theaters and strip clubs also had sporadic reopenings from June 1 to June 20. The county required these establishments to submit a reopening plan before being allowed to open their doors, resulting in no uniform reopening date.

On June 21, the mayors of Miami, Hialeah, Miami Gardens, North Miami Beach, Miami Shores, Aventura, and Key Biscayne said they would be requiring people to wear masks at all times in public.

MIA\_Restaurants\_Protest\_MJO (2)Helen Cantillo, 51, a waitress at Kao Sushi and Grill, attends a rally in front of AmericanAirlines Arena in downtown Miami on Friday, July 10, 2020, to protest Miami-Dade County Mayor Carlos Gimenez's order to close inside dining at restaurants to avoid the spread of the coronavirus.

July: 37,961 to 118,462 cases; 1,000 to 1,611 deaths

What seemed like a slow climb back to normalcy for residents was stopped in its tracks as July played out. The month was plagued with several rollbacks on reopenings and rising cases.

July saw the peak of new monthly cases in Miami-Dade, with 80,501 new cases. The rocket in cases caused Gimenez to roll back many of the freedoms allotted in May and June. Although Miami-Dade saw a record high in cases, the same isn't true for deaths, with only 611 more.

On July 1, a Miami Herald report found more than 7,000 Florida children had tested positive for the coronavirus and 12 diagnosed with multi-system inflammatory syndrome, or MIS-C. In South Florida, 2,865 children had contracted the virus. Also on this day, Gimenez ordered all restaurants to close on-site dining from 12:01 a.m. to 6 a.m. daily. He also expanded the mandatory ***mask*** order that now required masks in public as well as in businesses.

On July 2, Gimenez announced the re-closures of casinos, strip clubs, movie theaters and other entertainment venues. They had only been allowed to be open for about a month.

On July 7, Gimenez closed indoor dining in restaurants and only allowed outside dining. The decree allowed beaches, offices, stores and hair salons to stay open at the time.

On July 23, it was announced a 9-year-old girl had died from ***COVID***-19 in Putnam County, making her the youngest to die from the virus in Florida. Four other children had died from ***COVID***-19 at this time.

On July 29, Miami-Dade County Public Schools announced the 2020-2021 school year would start remotely on Aug. 31. The school district said it had until Sept. 30 to decide whether conditions allowed for the school district to reopen Oct. 5 for in-person classes.

IMG\_128\_MD\_AUDITORIUM\_TE\_3\_1\_C9IR5MAJ\_L585200357 (1).JPGHealthcare workers talk at the ***COVID***-19 drive-thru testing center at Miami-Dade County Auditorium in Miami on July 23, 2020.

August: 121,207 to 156,910 cases; 1,647 to 2,437 deaths

August brought Florida and Miami-Dade back on its reopening schedule as a decline in new cases stretched over the month, although new monthly deaths reached its peak in the county.

With 35,703 new cases in the month for Miami-Dade, it was enough to help push toward reopening the state. The effort to reopen went on in Miami-Dade even though the county saw 790 more deaths, which is its current death toll peak.

On Aug. 15, medical examiner's offices in South Florida had a backlog of more than 1,200 suspected ***COVID***-19 deaths awaiting certification, more than 650 were in Miami-Dade. The Florida Medical Examiners Commission voted to streamline the review process.

On Aug. 20, Miami-Dade County Public Schools confirmed 578 employees had tested positive for the virus from March through July. The school district employs 40,000 people.

On Aug. 24, a 6-year-old girl from Hillsborough County died from ***COVID***-19 related complications, making her the youngest person in Florida to die from the disease.

On Aug. 26, Gimenez ordered the reopening of nearly every retail and commercial business in the county. Businesses forced to remain closed included bars, nightclubs, movie theaters, bowling alleys, arcades, concerts and strip clubs.

MIA\_Presser12Desantis\_CarvaGov. Ron DeSantis, center, announced on Friday, Sept. 11, 2020 that both Miami-Dade and Broward counties will be moving to Phase 2 in the coronavirus pandemic reopening schedule. This move will allow both counties' school systems to begin resuming in-person learning. The option for distance learning will also remain in place. DeSantis was accompanied by Lt. Gov. Jeanette Nuñez, Miami-Dade County Mayor Carlos Gimenez, left, and Miami-Dade Schools Superintendent Alberto Carvalho, right, at the press conference at the Phillip and Patricia Frost Museum of Science.

September: 159,059 to 170,400 cases; 2,537 to 3,279 deaths

September continued a downward trend in new cases in Miami-Dade, but deaths were still high.

The county saw 11,341 new monthly cases, the lowest since May, and 742 more deaths, which would begin a decrease in monthly death tolls that would last into November. September also marked the full reopening of Florida.

On Sept. 17, Gimenez allowed for the reopening of movie theaters, concert houses, convention spaces, auditoriums, playhouses, bowling alleys, arcades and indoor amusement facilities.

On Sept. 25, Florida entered the final phase of the state's recovery plan. This allowed for the reopening of all businesses, with some under strict safety guidelines like capacity restrictions. This pushed Miami-Dade to reopen bars and nightclubs. The county also stopped issuing citations for not wearing masks.

On Sept. 30, Miami-Dade County Public Schools voted to begin a staggered reopening of schools on Oct. 5, with all students wishing to go to in-person learning to be back in class by Oct. 9.

Miami-Dade begins opening schools for in-person learningMiami-Dade School Superintendent Alberto Carvalho speaks at a press conference during the first day back at school at Andrea Castillo Prep K-8 on Monday. Schools reopened for pre-K, kindergarten, and first grade for in-person learning.

October: 170,882 to 185,891 cases; 3,284 to 3,647 deaths

October ended a two month downward trend in cases when 15,009 more were reported. As for deaths, 363 were reported in the month which was a steep drop from September.

On Oct. 4, Gimenez removed the mandatory ***mask*** and face covering in Miami-Dade. This meant masks were no longer required when exercising and in most cases when outside. Business ***mask*** policies would stay intact.

On Oct. 5, more than 22,000 students returned to classrooms in Miami-Dade public schools. Another 40,000 were expected to return to schools on Oct.7.

As of Oct. 31, schools had been opened for 27 days and had 408 total positive cases in students and employees, according to the Miami-Dade Public Schools Coronavirus Dashboard.

MIA\_TRUMP\_RALLY\_DAV35.JPGPresident Donald J. Trump speaks during his 'Make America Great Again Victory Rally', at Signature Flight Support OPF - Opa-Locka Executive Airport in Opa-locka, Florida, on Sunday, November 1, 2020.

November: 186,809 to 231,761 cases; 3,662 to 3,839 deaths

November continued an upward trend in cases in Miami-Dade County, more than doubling the amount of new monthly cases in October.

With 44,952 new cases in the month, November may be marking the beginning of a second wave. Deaths in the county continued on a downward trend for the third month in a row, with 161 more reported.

On Nov. 1, President Donald Trump held a rally at Miami-Opa-locka Executive Airport. The rally broke several of the county's "New Normal" rules, including breaking social distancing and ***mask*** polices in mass gatherings and keeping attendees past the county's midnight ***curfew***.

On Nov. 27, Miami-Dade's former mayor, Congressman-elect Carlos Gimenez, and his wife tested positive for ***COVID***-19. He had said he was "feeling good and experiencing no symptoms at this time."

On Nov. 30, newly elected Miami-Dade Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** said she tested positive for ***COVID***-19 and was experiencing mild symptoms. She believed she contracted it when her husband, who is a doctor, tended to a patient in a house call.

Bird Bowl reopens under Phase 2 of Miami-Dade reopeningAt Bird Bowl, a bowling alley, some of the changes include contactless temperature checks at the door, wearing provided gloves for ball fittings and staying at least six feet away from others.

**Load-Date:** December 3, 2020

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Florida coronavirus total passes the million mark with 8,847 new cases*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:61DS-R6X1-DYJM-M2NH-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

December 1, 2020 Tuesday

Copyright 2020 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** coronavirus

**Length:** 920 words

**Byline:**  Michelle Marchante and Devoun Cetoute

Miami Herald

**Body**

Florida has now confirmed more than one million cases of ***COVID***-19.

The state hit the milestone Tuesday when the Florida Department of Health confirmed 8,847 additional cases of the novel coronavirus, bringing the state's known total to 1,008,166.

That makes Florida the third state in the country to record one million cases since the pandemic began in March, according to the New York Times ***COVID***-19 Database. The other two states are Texas and California.

Florida also announced 82 ***COVID***-19 related resident deaths, bringing the resident toll to 18,679. There were no new non-resident deaths, leaving the cumulative non-resident toll at 237.

Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis said Monday that the state was not considering any further restrictions on businesses. He went on to say that closing schools in March due to ***COVID***-19 concern was the "biggest public health blunder in modern American history."

The Department of Education also released an emergency order Monday that keeps live, remote classes available as an option for the second semester of classes.

In Miami-Dade County, Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** said Monday she'd tested positive for ***COVID***-19 and is experiencing mild symptoms.

"It's like a cold so far," she said. "Yesterday afternoon, I started coughing. Then it progressed to sneezing and a runny nose. I looked up the symptoms. As I've been telling people, in this day and age it's ***COVID*** until proven otherwise."

Miami flash briefing player embed

Confirmed ***COVID***-19 cases in South Florida

Miami-Dade County reported 2,143 additional confirmed cases of ***COVID***-19 and four new deaths, according to Florida's Department of Health. The county has a total of 231,761 confirmed cases and 3,839 deaths. Percent positivity for new cases decreased from 9.88% to 9.65%. The 14-day percent positivity average was 8.31%, according to Miami-Dade County's "New Normal" dashboard.

Broward County reported 801 additional confirmed cases and no new deaths. The county now has a known total of 108,325 cases and 1,664 deaths. Percent positivity for new cases decreased from 8.42% to 7.11%.

Palm Beach County saw 564 additional confirmed cases and three new deaths. The county now has 65,936 confirmed cases and 1,697 deaths. Percent positivity for new cases increased from 7.50% to 9.87%.

Monroe County confirmed 11 additional cases and one new death. The county has a known total of 3,392 cases and 28 deaths. Percent positivity for new cases decreased from 7.58% to 7.28%.

***COVID***-19 hospitalizations in Florida

One of the tools that officials rely on to determine whether the coronavirus situation is improving in the state is hospitalization data. Unlike testing, which might be limited or takes days to report results, hospitalizations can help give officials a real-time snapshot of how many people are severely ill with ***COVID***-19.

The Florida Agency for Health Care Administration reports the number of patients hospitalized statewide with a "primary diagnosis of ***COVID***." The data, which is updated at least every hour, does not distinguish between the number of ***COVID***-19 patients in hospital intensive care units and those in acute-care beds, which require less attention from nurses.

Previously, the state was providing only the total number of hospitalizations in its statewide and county-level data. Miami-Dade was an exception, with hospitals self-reporting a number of key metrics, including hospitalizations, to the county, which has made this data public for several months.

As of 3:02 p.m. Tuesday, there were 4,279 ***COVID***-19 patients admitted into hospitals throughout the state, according to the Florida Agency for Health Care Administration dashboard. This is a big jump from what the state was reporting last month though it's still less than early August, when more than 5,000 ***COVID***-19 patients were admitted into hospitals throughout the state.

Of Tuesday's hospitalizations, 677 were in Miami-Dade, 438 in Broward, 292 in Palm Beach and seven in Monroe, according to the agency.

Florida's current hospitalization data does not always match the hospitalization data reported in Miami-Dade's "New Normal" dashboard. Officials say this could be for a number of reasons, including the frequency of daily updates.

On Tuesday, Miami-Dade hospitalizations for ***COVID***-19 complications increased from 796 to 799, according to Miami-Dade County's "New Normal" dashboard. According to Tuesday's data, 111 people were discharged and 110 people were admitted.

The state has had a total of 55,197 Florida residents hospitalized for ***COVID***-19-related complications, according to Florida's ***COVID***-19 Data and Surveillance Dashboard.

***COVID***-19 Testing in Florida

Testing in Florida has seen steady growth since the ***COVID***-19 crisis began.

Testing, like hospitalizations, helps officials determine the virus' progress and plays a role in deciding whether it is safe to lift ***stay-at-home*** orders and loosen restrictions.

Epidemiologists use the testing data to create a positivity rate. The rate helps them determine if a rise in cases is because of an increase in testing or whether there's increased transmission of the virus in the community.

On Tuesday, Florida's Department of Health reported the results of 111,627 people tested on Monday. The positivity rate of new cases (people who tested positive for the first time) increased from 8.38% to 8.69%.

If retests are included -- people who have tested positive once and are being tested for a second time -- the positivity rate decreased from 10.99% to 10.50%, according to the report.

**Load-Date:** December 1, 2020

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*South Florida hospitalizations are surging again as Florida COVID total hits 1 million*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:61DW-DSB1-JC3J-X20Y-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

December 1, 2020 Tuesday

Copyright 2020 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** coronavirus

**Length:** 829 words

**Byline:**  Ben Conarck

Miami Herald

**Body**

Nearly nine months out from when Florida confirmed its first ***COVID***-19 case, some of the state's largest public hospital networks are managing a late fall resurgence of the virus that has health leaders extending contracts for out-of-state nurses.

South Florida hospitals say they are cautiously optimistic they can continue to care for increasing numbers of ***COVID*** patients without scaling back non-emergency medical procedures, even as a surge that has built since early November intensifies and the state eclipses 1 million ***COVID***-19 cases, the third-highest tally in the nation behind Texas and California.

Meanwhile, local leaders such as Miami Mayor Francis Suarez and Miami-Dade County Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** have no recourse to issue the types of emergency measures -- from business closures to public health curfews -- that were stripped away by Gov. Ron DeSantis at the conclusion of September. Suarez was an early ***COVID*** patient, contracting the virus in the spring and isolating at home at that time.

At a Tuesday meeting with Miami-Dade commissioners, Levine Cava addressed what she called an alarming escalation in the coronavirus situation -- while isolating at her home with a ***COVID*** diagnosis she received Monday.

"Cases are going up astronomically. Two thousand cases yesterday. That includes me and my husband," she said on a video feed into the commission chambers. "It's really quite astonishing."

The fall surge's gradual build has in recent days accelerated to triple-digit admissions of ***COVID***-19 patients across Miami-Dade hospitals, which are treating more people with the disease than they have since August. Peter Paige, Miami-Dade's newly minted chief medical officer and chief clinical officer at the county public hospital network, Jackson Health System, said clinical staff are bracing for the current surge to last for several weeks, or months, as the region awaits the imminent approval and arrival of the first doses of ***COVID***-19 vaccines.

Paige, like top hospital officials at South Broward County's Memorial Healthcare System, said he is optimistic that this surge won't carry the same force of the one seen over the summer.

"We're hopeful that we don't get back to that point, but it's still really early to tell," said Paige. "We're starting to see this trend going up."

Jackson Health System prepares for a ***COVID***-19 vaccineHealthcare workers at Miami's public hospital network are preparing to distribute a ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** to Jackson Health System employees first, then nursing home residents and others.

The thinking, which has been articulated by some infectious disease experts and floated to Jackson leaders by top state officials including Surgeon General Scott Rivkees, is that a certain level of partial population immunity -- or the sheer number of people already infected and who no longer transmit the virus -- from hard-hit areas like Miami will dampen future surges.

The summer surge likely also affected behaviors such as physical distancing in populations that lived through the first surge, which peaked in late July, when Jackson Health System was treating as many as 485 ***COVID*** patients daily. The Jackson hospital network is currently treating about 170 ***COVID***-positive patients.

Preparing for a long winter

Memorial Healthcare System reached a height of 680 ***COVID***-19 inpatients in late July before dipping to about 100 over much of the fall. Now, the hospital network is treating about 200, according to Maggie Hansen, senior vice president and chief nurse executive for the system.

Memorial was so inundated with ***COVID***-19 in the summer that it had to convert auditoriums into treatment areas and repurpose other parts of its hospitals to accommodate the surge. On top of that physical restructuring, the hospital network hired 300 nurses from out of state through its internal staffing agency.

About a month ago, Hansen said, Memorial refreshed some of those contracts, re-signing about 100 surplus nurses heading into what they expect to be a long winter.

"We have to have the staff to take care of our patients," Hansen said. "... Our nursing and medical staff, they're tired. We've got to take care of them, too."

Hansen said Memorial has completely retooled many of its facilities to accommodate patient flow in the ***COVID*** era while still performing other essential medical procedures. Hospital leaders expect that to be the status quo for some time.

As far as how much worse things will get, Hansen similarly expressed optimism that Memorial's doctors and nurses won't face another situation like the one in July.

"We just don't know, and I think that's part of what's so stressful for our frontline staff, is that they don't see an end," Hansen said. "They experienced that July surge and they're afraid of it happening again."

medcial supplies.jpgMedical supplies in Miami-Dade County. ***COVID***-19 cases and current hospitalizations have risen this week in Florida.

Miami Herald Staff Writer Douglas Hanks contributed to this report.

**Load-Date:** December 1, 2020

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Florida's vaccine questions, Gimenez tests positive, Mayor Diaz returns*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:61DG-SY21-JC3J-X408-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

November 30, 2020 Monday

Copyright 2020 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** politics\_policy\_in\_sunshine\_state

**Length:** 1233 words

**Byline:**  Mary Ellen Klas

Newsletters |

**Body**

It's Monday, Nov. 30 and we're getting closer to the prospect of a coronavirus ***vaccine*** arriving in Florida, but are we ready? That is one of dozens of questions yet to be answered by Gov. Ron DeSantis and his administration as the federal government has assigned governors the job of deciding how to navigate the challenge of rationing the first doses of the ***vaccine***.

While some governors have mapped out their ***COVID*** distribution plans, DeSantis has offered the public a draft plan with few specifics. He has declined to answer questions about the details of distribution and the Florida Department of Health has also not offered any details.

WHAT WE'RE WATCHING

U.S. Sen. Rick Scott is also pushing for specifics, last week sending a letter to U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar pressing for more information on ***vaccine*** funding and distribution plans. We do know that five Florida hospitals are first in line to receive the Pfizer ***vaccine***, which is nearing federal approval.

Video Ron: But how effectively this works in Florida will be a big test for DeSantis, who has touted the ***vaccine*** as a primary containment strategy. Meanwhile, the governor has remained on the sidelines all month. Last week, he used a video message for the second week in a row as his only method of communicating to the public about the coronavirus. The tactic allowed him to avoid direct questions from reporters about how state officials are decide who gets the first doses of vaccines and therapeutics and what criteria is used.

His obscurity also allowed him to continue to avoid addressing questions about the president's unsubstantiated claims that the election was "rigged" and he has not responded to questions about the state's testing effort and whether he will reinstate the authority of local governments to impose coronavirus restrictions.

CNN is counting: The Herald story on the governor's video strategy caught the attention of Brian Stelter on CNN's Reliable Sources on Sunday. He noted that while DeSantis was the only governor in the nation who has not held a single press briefing about ***COVID***-19 in November, there are 14 other governors who only held a single ***COVID*** briefing in the last month. Stelter said the governors should show "real leadership" by answering questions on a regular basis.

Shifting burden: Just as President Trump has shifted the burden of containing the coronavirus to the states, the governor has made it more difficult for cities and counties to do it. But he has also used his executive power to simultaneously constrain them and that is becoming a problem as cases surge. Miami-Dade's newly-elected Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** said last week that the governor's September order forcing the county to reopen bars and nightclubs, and preventing county police from issuing citations for ***mask*** violations, limits what she can do to as coronavirus hospitalizations spike again.

On Sunday, the Florida Department of Health reported 7,363 new cases of novel coronavirus and 59 deaths. More than 27% of those new cases came from Miami-Dade County. And the number of patients in ICUs at Miami-Dade County hospitals is rising steadily, a sign that more ***COVID***-19 deaths are coming.

Elder cases surge: For all the talk of protecting the vulnerable in Florida, there has been a 35 percent increase in the number of elderly residents in long-term care facilities in Florida who have tested positive for ***COVID***-19 in the last week. The deaths in the nursing homes with the worst safety records also continues to climb. In the community, the number of cases among people over age 65 also has soared, with a 68% increase in the last two weeks.

Commissioners\_Farewell\_MJO\_4.JPGMiami-Dade Mayor Carlos A. Gimenez attends a farewell event at Port Miami in Miami, Florida on Friday, November 6, 2020. The event bid farewell to term-limited commissioners.

Gimenez gets ***COVID***: After months of campaigning and trying to be aggressive about containing coronavirus in Miami, Miami-Dade County's former mayor, Congressman-elect Carlos Gimenez, last week tested positive for the novel coronavirus along with his wife, Lourdes Gimenez. The 66-year-old Republican said he plans to participate virtually in the New Member Orientation for newly elected members of the U.S. House of Representatives.

WHAT WE'RE TALKING ABOUT

***Vaccine*** incentives? Should the government pay people to get the ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine***? It's an idea getting some attention in Washington as some suggest that if the U.S. is to pass another round of stimulus money, Congress should attach some of it to an incentive to encourage people to get vaccinated.

Liability limits: Florida legislators have said little about what their intentions are for addressing the fallout from the coronavirus except that they are expecting to pass legislation to limit liability from lawsuits. The story of Gerardo Gutierrez reminds us what that might look like. The former deli employee at the Sunset Harbour Publix was told by his employer not to wear masks and gloves early in the pandemic. The company said it was just following CDC guidance at the time but now Gutierrez's family has sued the company after he contracted ***COVID***-19 from a co-worker in the deli and died in April. He was 70.

Diaz for Dem Chair? Miami Mayor Manny Diaz has called Democratic Party leaders in recent days to discuss his interest in leading the state party next year as its chairman. Diaz, the mayor of the city of Miami from 2001 until 2009, said he believes the party is at a tipping point after losing almost every statewide race since the 2014 elections. He said he wants to help right the ship.

Cuban-American at DHS: President-elect Joe Biden announced he will nominate Alejandro Mayorkas, a Cuban-American immigrant who lived in Miami as a child, to serve as Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security. Mayorkas, 60, will be the first immigrant and the first Hispanic to lead the Department of Homeland Security, which oversees U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement as well as U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services.

Blinken battle: Antony Blinken, Joe Biden's secretary of state nominee, has sparred with Republican U.S. Sen. Marco Rubio and is likely to face opposition from the senator over his lack of candor. In 2014, Blinken told Rubio during his confirmation hearing that President Barack Obama wouldn't unilaterally change Cuba policy. Then, just days after Blinken was confirmed by the Senate, Obama ordered the State Department to establish an embassy in Havana for the first time in more than a half-century. Blinken later apologized for not being more forthright with the Senate.

Election violation? Did the mysterious company that gave $550,000 contributions to two political committees backing no-party candidates in three tight state Senate races break the law? The company was not registered as a political committee in Florida but it appears to have had a heavy hand in influencing the success of three Republicans on Election Day.

Stay safe all and remember, the Miami Herald needs your support if we are to continue to supply the meaningful local journalism you count on during these unprecedented times. To support vital reporting such as this, please consider a subscription for unlimited digital access.

Know someone who'd like to get this? Send this to a friend to receive our weekly newsletter on politics and policy.

**Load-Date:** November 30, 2020

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Carlos Gimenez, Miami-Dade congressman-elect, tests positive for COVID-19*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:61D1-HW41-DYJM-M067-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

November 27, 2020 Friday

Copyright 2020 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** politics\_government

**Length:** 911 words

**Byline:**  Devoun Cetoute

Miami Herald

**Body**

Miami-Dade County's former mayor, Congressman-elect Carlos Gimenez, and his wife have tested positive for the novel coronavirus. This comes as the county reported more than 3,700 new ***COVID***-19 cases since Wednesday.

Just after 4 p.m. Friday, Gimenez, 66, tweeted that after several negative tests, he and his wife, Lourdes Gimenez, 65, had tested positive. He said they are "feeling good and experiencing no symptoms at this time."

gimenez tweet

As mayor, Gimenez took an aggressive stance in combating the virus, although he raised eyebrows on the Sunday night before the election when he allowed President Donald Trump to hold a campaign event at Opa-locka's executive airport that violated the mayor's ***curfew***.

He will be self-isolating in his home but will continue virtually attending the New Member Orientation for newly elected members of the House of Representatives. Gimenez, a Republican, defeated Democratic incumbent Debbie Mucarsel-Powell in Florida's 26th District, Florida's most competitive U.S. House race.

Gimenez, who was term limited as mayor, falls into a high-risk category for ***COVID***-19 because of his age.

***Daniella Levine Cava***, the former commissioner sworn in as the new Miami-Dade mayor on Nov. 17, sent well wishes to her predecessor, also via Twitter.

Also on Friday, Florida's Department of Health released two days' worth of virus figures because of the Thanksgiving holiday, confirming 17,344 more cases. The new cases bringing the state's total to 979,020, third-highest in raw numbers in the country. The state also reported 109 new resident deaths, bringing the cumulative toll to 18,363.

Miami-Dade County reported 3,752 new cases since Wednesday and seven new deaths. The county has a total of 224,166 confirmed cases and 3,799 deaths, the highest in the state.

Handling the Novel Coronavirus Pandemic

Gimenez's positive test followed months of grappling with the virus as a politician trying to balance the safety of the public against the rights and needs of business owners.

At the start of the pandemic, then-Mayor Gimenez cited state guidance in his position that the county saw no need to cancel Ultra or other major events, like the Miami-Dade County Fair & Exposition.

This position changed a week later when Gimenez declared a state of emergency in Miami-Dade. The first large event that was canceled after this was the Youth Fair hours before its first opening. Later that same day, Gimenez called on President Trump to suspend travel between Cuba and Florida, a day after Cuba reported its first three cases.

Two days after this declaration, Miami Mayor Francis Suarez tested positive for ***COVID***-19, later testing negative after 18 days in quarantine. Miami-Dade and Broward school districts also announced they would be closing to in-person learning.

Soon after, Gimenez ordered an indefinite closing of daytime activity centers for seniors and suspension of evictions and water cut-offs.

One of the more extraordinary measures he took as cases spiraled was ordering the closure of all the bars, restaurants, taverns, pubs, nightclubs, movie theaters, concert halls, gyms, bowling alleys and other similar businesses in the county by 11 p.m.

The next day, all nonessential retail and commercial businesses were forced to close their doors. This included supply, shops, barbers, casinos and malls. Hundreds of businesses sheltered their doors.

On March 26, Miami-Dade issued its first "Safer at Home" order, urging residents to stay home and only go out for essential activities, like work, shopping and recreational activities.

Road to Reopening

Like many mayors, Gimenez used Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis' plan for Florida's Recovery as a baseline and became stricter in some portions where necessary.

The first of three phases was put into effect May 4. Shortly before the county allowed phase one reopening, Gimenez released the New Normal Guide, a plan that included five colored reopening phases.

The county was placed in the yellow phase, which corresponded to DeSantis' phase one. This meant limited openings of nonessential businesses and other facilities, along with parks and open spaces being able to open again.

Phase two went into effect June 5 and phase three by Sept. 25, which allowed for a full reopening of all businesses with limited social-distancing protocols.

Miami-Dade entered this final phase as well with the rest of the state, but Gimenez added additional restrictions like maximum seating per table in restaurants and some establishments having to keep at 50% capacity.

Mass gathering events and sporting events were allowed to resume but with capacity limits. But Miami-Dade's ***curfew*** stayed in place.

One of the final tests of Gimenez's road to reopening was Trump's rally at Miami-Opa-locka Executive Airport on Nov. 1. Earlier that day Gimenez said he would not lift a midnight ***curfew*** that was still affecting the county.

Trump's appearance ran afoul of the county's "New Normal" rules. Thousands of supporters attended the event, breaking the county's capacity guidelines, and the rally lasted well after the midnight ***curfew***. Breaking these rules as a restaurant meant $500 fines, but the rally was allowed to carry on.

During the noisy event, Gimenez was booed by some rally goers, despite his vocal support for Trump, possibly because his moves to control the virus seemed to go farther than what the president had endorsed. In the end it didn't matter, as Gimenez won election Nov. 3 even as the president lost.

**Load-Date:** November 28, 2020

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*'This is the epicenter.' Liberty City park honors COVID-19 victims with 1,500 tombstones*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:61CF-KH61-JC3J-X0YC-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

November 25, 2020 Wednesday

Copyright 2020 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** edison\_liberty\_city

**Length:** 901 words

**Byline:**  C. Isaiah Smalls II

Miami Herald

**Body**

To show how the coronavirus is ravaging Black Miamians, Congresswoman Frederica Wilson created a makeshift cemetery in Liberty City. Tuesday, she added another 1,000 markers as a stark reminder that for members of her district, the pandemic rages on.

"This is the epicenter of the pandemic," Wilson said. "We represent many of the ZIP codes where the virus is roaring like a lion."

With Miami Mayor Francis Suarez and Miami-Dade County Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** at her side, Wilson brought the total number of plastic tombstones to 1,500. Between the prayers and hymnals, the event served as a pseudo funeral for the several audience members who lost loved ones to the virus.

MIA\_***COVID***\_CEMETERY\_DAV12Miami-Dade County resident Joanna Moore creates a tombstone for her late mother's first cousin who recently died from ***COVID***-19. Moore did so after an event on Nov. 24, 2020, to unveil an expanded memorial cemetery in Liberty City's Simonoff Park for those lost to the coronavirus. Moore's mother also passed away from ***COVID***-19 in August.....and conduct a ceremonial ribbon cutting for new ***COVID***-19 testing site established at the nearby Jessie Trice Community Health System (JTCHS) in partnership with Florida International University to serve Miami-Dade County's most vulnerable communities, in Liberty City, Florida, on Tuesday, November 24, 2020.

The ceremonial cemetery expansion also served as the announcement of a new ***COVID***-19 testing site at the nearby Jessie Trice Community Health System. JTCHS has partnered with Florida International University in an initiative to better serve and educate Miami-Dade's underserved communities.

"Testing is most important," said Annie Neasman, president and chief executive officer of JTCHS.

The decision to place the cemetery in Simonoff Floral Park was no coincidence. Congressional District 24, which includes Liberty City, Little Haiti and Miami Gardens, has been one of the hardest hit areas not just in Florida but in the entire United States, said Wilson. African Americans continue to have higher ***COVID***-19 hospitalization and death rates than their white counterparts. To make matters worse, many families were unable to give their deceased relatives the home-going service they deserved.

"We are at about 4,000 lives lost right here in Miami-Dade County and until Congresswoman Wilson did this important memorial, they were not acknowledged, they were not memorialized in our community," Levine Cava said.

MIA\_***COVID***\_CEMETERY\_DAV2Congresswoman Frederica Wilson, center, speaks as Miami-Dade County Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava***, left, and Miami Mayor Francis Suarez, right, stand closely by during an event to unveil an expanded memorial cemetery in Liberty City's Simonoff Park, in memory to those lost to coronavirus, and conduct a ceremonial ribbon cutting for new ***COVID***-19 testing site established at the nearby Jessie Trice Community Health System (JTCHS) in partnership with Florida International University to serve Miami-Dade County's most vulnerable communities, in Liberty City, Florida, on Tuesday, November 24, 2020.

With the holiday season around the corner, the cemetery also reminded passersby to avoid large gatherings. Many of the tombstones contained heartfelt messages and flowers; others had obituaries or funeral programs taped to their sides.

Joanna Moore, a registered nurse who lost her mother to ***COVID***-19, was one of the many speakers who warned against holding large family gatherings.

"There will be someone sitting at a dinner table on Thursday evening who won't be with us at Christmas," Moore said.

Dr. Inaki Bent called the memorial "chilling." A physician at Jackson Health System, he's been forced to deliver the difficult news of a loved one's passing to countless families. Bent reminded the audience that simple tasks like wearing masks, washing hands and socially distancing are essentially acts of patriotism.

After the 9/11 terrorist attacks, he noted, "The country rallied around the common goal of defeating an enemy. I'm asking the community to rally around defeating this enemy so that we won't have any more victims."

MIA\_***COVID***\_CEMETERY\_DAV9Congresswoman Frederica Wilson, along with other county dignitaries such as Miami-Dade County Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** and Miami Mayor Francis Suarez, spoke at an event on Nov. 24, 2020, to unveil an expanded memorial cemetery in Liberty City's Simonoff Park in memory of those lost to the coronavirus, and to conduct a ceremonial ribbon cutting for a new ***COVID***-19 testing site established at the nearby Jessie Trice Community Health System in partnership with Florida International University to serve Miami-Dade County's most vulnerable communities.

For funeral directors like Dwight Jackson, 2020 has been a year unlike any other. Miami-Dade's ***COVID***-19 deaths have brought an explosive need for his services -- one he would gladly have done without, the Richardson Mortuary manager told the audience of about 50.

As of Tuesday, nearly 3,800 people have passed away from the coronavirus in Miami-Dade alone, the highest number of any Florida county and about 21 percent of the state's total deaths.

"I've been a funeral director almost 45 years of my life and I've never seen nothing as detrimental as this in my life," Jackson said.

In her final remarks, Wilson issued an unfiltered reminder to the public:

"Wear your damn ***mask***, wash your damn hands and give me some space."

**Load-Date:** November 25, 2020

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Miami-Dade's Thanksgiving message: COVID is getting worse. Stay home or eat outside*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:61CF-KH61-JC3J-X0Y9-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

November 25, 2020 Wednesday

Copyright 2020 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** miami\_dade

**Length:** 773 words

**Byline:**  Douglas Hanks and Ben Conarck

Miami Herald

**Body**

Thanksgiving may bring the most large indoor gatherings Miami-Dade has seen during the coronavirus pandemic, and the county on Tuesday rolled out a familiar message to limit the damage: Consider staying home, avoid crowds inside and remember that eating outside is the safest route for meals.

"The numbers are increasing. It's a rising concern for our county and for our cities," said Dr. Peter Paige, a senior administrator at the county's Jackson hospital system who also serves as the newly appointed chief medical officer for Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava***. "We have to look for opportunities to try and minimize our risk of having holiday celebrations while still enjoying the company of family and friends."

conarck tweet

Paige and other county leaders laid out the three tiers of Thanksgiving safety as ***COVID*** spread accelerates. The safest approach is to stay home and celebrate without guests. If risking a dinner with guests outside the household, eating outdoors reduces the danger of ***COVID*** transmission while masks are off during meals.

It's the traditional Thanksgiving gathering that presents the most hazards: multiple households convening inside for hours of maskless eating and drinking. For that celebration, the county has some tips: Have each household bring its own food and dishes to reduce risks from surface contamination, spread out and wear masks as often as possible.

"We're focusing on precautions. We're focusing on prevention," Levine Cava said during the online press conference, her first since taking office on Nov. 17. She hasn't announced new measures to combat ***COVID***-19 and extended the emergency orders in place when the term ended for her predecessor, Carlos Gimenez.

Alarm bells over Miami-Dade's ***COVID*** spread

Alarm bells have been ringing all month over Miami-Dade's coronavirus statistics, with case counts surging to a seven-day average of more than 1,800 daily cases in the state's most populous county.

But even in comparison to other large counties, Miami-Dade has seen its caseload spike to about 68 daily cases per 100,000 people, well outpacing the still high 45 daily case average in Broward and 34 in Orange counties, according to epidemiologist Jason Salemi of the University of South Florida's dashboard.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention defines "low incidence" as 10 daily cases per 100,000 people. Hospitalizations for severe ***COVID***-19 illness have been rising slowly but steadily in tow behind the spiking cases, reaching 634 patients countywide on Monday morning.

With cases rising, Miami-Dade won't take a break Thanksgiving on testing. State sites, including Marlins Park and Hard Rock Stadium, will close Thursday. All county-run sites, such as the Joseph Caleb Center, will remain open from 7:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. Location information is available at miamidade.gov/coronavirus.

For her debut ***COVID*** press conference, Levine Cava tapped city mayors, and academic and business organizations to be on the Zoom call as well. One theme was criticism of Gov. Ron DeSantis, whose statewide order from late September forced Miami-Dade to reopen bars and nightclubs and prevents local governments from collecting fines tied to emergency ***COVID*** orders.

"It's great to be united here in Miami-Dade County," said Hialeah Mayor Carlos Hernández. "Hopefully our state government, our governor, will understand we believe in science. That science is the best way to keep our businesses open."

Miami flash briefing player embed

Levine Cava hasn't spoken to DeSantis yet

Like DeSantis, Hernández is a Republican. So is Francis Suarez, the mayor of Miami, who said Tuesday he's been unable to get DeSantis on the phone to talk about allowing cities and counties to get tougher on ***mask*** mandates. "We don't have all the tools in our tool box," Suarez said. "I'm going to continue to reach out to Governor DeSantis and impress upon him the need for us to have that local control."

The Sept. 25 DeSantis order on fines has all but stopped citations for Miami-Dade's countywide ***mask*** mandate, though Miami Beach announced this week it would resume issuing tickets even if fine collections are on hold.

"Now is definitely not the time to let up," Miami Beach Mayor Dan Gelber said.

A week into her tenure as leader of Florida's largest local government and the one managing the state's most severe ***COVID*** hot spot, Levine Cava said she's also been unable to connect with DeSantis. The governor's office did not respond to a request for comment on when DeSantis planned to connect with Levine Cava, a Democrat.

"I am looking forward to speaking to the governor," Levine Cava said. "I look forward to his call."

**Load-Date:** November 25, 2020

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Miami Beach police can now issue face-mask citations to people who violate COVID order*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:61C8-Y0J1-JC3J-X3NT-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

November 24, 2020 Tuesday

Copyright 2020 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** miami\_beach

**Length:** 905 words

**Byline:**  Martin Vassolo

Miami Herald

**Body**

After an executive order from Gov. Ron DeSantis led the city of Miami Beach to stop enforcing its ***COVID***-19 ***mask*** mandate, the city has authorized police to start issuing citations to anyone who refuses to wear a facial covering leading up to Thanksgiving and over the weekend.

Under the city's new enforcement plan, police will only issue a citation if the violator refuses to wear a ***mask*** provided to them. The policy change, announced Tuesday by city manager Jimmy Morales, goes into effect Wednesday and will last at least through the weekend.

The citations will carry a $50 fine, to be collected when legally allowed. Police will enforce the order in commercial corridors citywide.

"We will evaluate the effectiveness of the effort this weekend to determine if and how to best continue with the individual citations," a city spokeswoman said in a statement.

The governor's Sept. 25 order suspended the "collection of fines and penalties associated with ***COVID***-19 enforced upon individuals," weakening local ***mask*** mandates. While some South Florida municipalities -- like Miami-Dade and the cities of Miami and Key West -- have continued to issue face-***mask*** citations, Miami Beach stopped enforcing the emergency measure altogether following the DeSantis order.

Meanwhile, Miami Beach Mayor Dan Gelber has repeatedly implored DeSantis to make masks mandatory statewide,

"My city was among the first municipalities in the nation to require ***mask*** usage, and along with Miami-Dade County and Miami we have had orders requiring masks indoors and outside for months," Gelber wrote in a Sept. 26 letter to DeSantis, responding to his executive order. "We believe these mandates have been a major reason why our virus rate came down after the deadly surge that followed your last reopening."

Morales, who wields unilateral decision-making powers granted to him by the commission during the city's state of emergency, authorized the policy change and said he believes enforcing the order in even a limited capacity should encourage safe behavior during a time when holiday gatherings threaten to worsen the surge in ***COVID***-19 cases in Miami-Dade County and nationwide.

"In an effort to be proactive this weekend, I have spoken with Chief [Richard] Clements and starting tomorrow, our police officers in the commercial districts around the city will reach out to individuals that are not wearing masks and first offer them a ***mask*** to wear," Morales wrote in the email. "If the individual refuses, the officer will then issue a citation."

Body-camera video shows what it's like to be fined $50 for breaking Miami Beach face-***mask*** orderIn Miami Beach, not wearing a face ***mask*** can cost you $50. Body-camera footage obtained by the Miami Herald shows Code Compliance officers handing out tickets on July 23.

Miami Beach stopped enforcing ***mask*** law. Others didn't

Broward and Miami-Dade counties both mandate the use of masks in public, but Broward inspectors have not been issuing citations to individuals, enforcing business restrictions instead, a spokesman said.

In Miami-Dade, police continue to enforce the countywide ***mask*** mandate, although officers have not issued a single citation in November. Police attribute the decline in citations to the changing habits of residents, not a ramping down of enforcement.

"It has nothing to do with the governor," said Det. Alvaro Zabaleta, a Miami-Dade Police spokesman. "Our job is to enforce the emergency orders signed by the mayor's office."

In the city of Miami, police say they have taken a "more educational approach" to its ***mask*** law, but officers reserve the right to issue a citation in "extreme cases," according to a spokeswoman for the city.

Key West last week toughened its ***mask*** law to require that individuals cover their faces even if they are outside and distant from others. In October, the city announced it would continue to issue citations for violations of the order.

But in Miami Beach, police and code officers stopped enforcing the county's ***mask*** mandate after DeSantis signed the executive order. They have continued to enforce the use of masks in businesses.

In a Nov. 19 email to the Herald, the city spokeswoman said the city was "prohibited to issue violations to individuals" under the governor's order.

"What we do enforce is against businesses that do not require employees or patrons to wear masks," she wrote.

During a Tuesday press conference with Miami-Dade Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** and other local leaders to discuss the recent surge in ***COVID***-19 cases in the county, Gelber said he hopes the new enforcement strategy can help limit the spread of the virus during the holidays.

"The holidays approaching in the midst of this ongoing surge, kids coming home for the holidays like mine have, becomes a confluence of various potentially dangerous circumstances," he said. "I would give you just this: Please wear the ***mask***. My city, although we can no longer impose the fine right now, we will resume giving out free masks and citations if for only the messaging that it is so important to keep that ***mask*** on."

Commissioner Ricky Arriola, who has criticized the city's coronavirus policies as harmful to businesses, reacted to the new policy in a social media post. He said the city appears to be ignoring state law by empowering police to issue citations.

"Here we are going to issue citations even though the governor has said it's unenforceable," Arriola said. "We are going to do it, anyway."

**Load-Date:** November 25, 2020

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Miami-Dade's new mayor faces growing COVID cases with shrinking playbook to stop them*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:61C6-9G21-DYJM-M09F-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

November 23, 2020 Monday

Copyright 2020 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** miami\_dade

**Length:** 1333 words

**Byline:**  Douglas Hanks

Miami Herald

**Body**

A week into overseeing Miami-Dade County's response to an unprecedented health and economic crisis, Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava*** faces a discouraging combination: ***COVID***-19 cases are rising, and she has fewer options than her predecessor did to reverse the trend.

As the new mayor assembles her senior management team -- on Monday she announced Miami Beach's city manager, Jimmy Morales, would take over as the county's chief operations officer -- she's also faced with trying to tamp down the ***COVID*** spread that's bound to arrive with the Thanksgiving holiday. And if coronavirus cases accelerate after the weekend, her administration will face its first crisis with a thinned-out playbook.

When ***COVID***-19 cases surged in July, then-Mayor Carlos Gimenez imposed a 10 p.m. ***curfew*** and closed restaurant dining rooms. Levine Cava inherited a ***curfew*** rolled back to midnight and thrown into a legal gray area by a court challenge that prompted the city of Miami to stop enforcing it.

An order from Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis in late September forced Miami-Dade to reopen bars and nightclubs, and prevents Levine Cava from closing them back down if coronavirus hospitalizations spike again. County police haven't issued a single citation for ***mask*** violations this month, on the heels of a related DeSantis order barring counties from collecting fines on tickets tied to ***COVID*** orders.

Gimenez's guru on emergency ***COVID***-19 orders, former deputy mayor Jennifer Moon, is leaving the Levine Cava administration to take on an advisory role with the County Commission. While the Gimenez administration had about $1 billion in federal coronavirus aid to bolster the transit budget and provide relief across the economy, much of the money runs out by the end of the year.

"That is a critical, critical feature. If you ask businesses to make sacrifices, you have to give something to keep them going," Levine Cava said Monday afternoon, six days after taking office on Nov. 17. "And we're limited by the governor in terms of what we can do."

This week presents an early test for Levine Cava, who based her campaign in part on steady criticism of the Gimenez approach to ***COVID***-19. So far, she's stuck with the same messaging as her predecessor: Wear masks, maintain social distancing and avoid social gatherings at home.

Levine Cava faces the toughest test yet on the risks from spread at family gatherings with Thanksgiving days away. The county's official messaging discourages celebrations beyond the immediate household. A county-produced video campaign on Thanksgiving encourages viewers to "share a virtual dinner with family and friends."

The chief medical officer

The new mayor plans to ramp up the messaging at a Tuesday afternoon press conference with the doctor she's tapped to be the medical voice on the county's ***COVID***-19 response, Jackson Health System's Dr. Peter Paige.

"We will reinforce the messaging," said Paige, named Miami-Dade's chief medical officer during Levine Cava's swearing-in speech last week, "to point out that this is going to be a higher-risk time."

Paige's role as Levine Cava's chief medical officer fulfills a campaign promise to create the post, though it's unclear how involved he'll be on a day-to-day basis with the administration. Paige said he's retaining his role as a senior administrator at Jackson, which will continue to pay him for full-time work. His office will remain at the county-funded hospital system.

"I'm going to keep doing what I'm doing," he said. "I'm going to weave this into my daily duties."

In an interview, Levine Cava said she's confident Miami-Dade can continue pressing residents and businesses to take the steps that will slow ***COVID*** spread by wearing masks and reducing crowds. She noted Miami-Dade police continue enforcing some emergency orders that now carry her signature, including requirements that people inside restaurants wear masks and that businesses close by midnight.

"We know certain things work," she said. "We know masking works. We know distancing works. ... But people are always letting their guard down. We need a united voice to say this is not the time to let your guard down."

County police had been actively enforcing a countywide ***mask*** order since July, when Miami-Dade commissioners created a $100 civil penalty for violations instead of the harsher option of issuing a criminal penalty. DeSantis' Sept. 25 order prevents local governments from collecting those fines, and that move slowed county citations to a trickle.

County police issued 517 ***mask*** citations to individuals since the fines started in July, county police spokesperson Alvaro Zabaleta said Monday. That's a pace of at least three a day. In November, though, county police have issued zero ***mask*** citations. Zabaleta saw the drop-off in citations as a sign of compliance and not as a result of the DeSantis order. "People get the hint," he said.

Levine Cava's chief administrators

Monday saw Levine Cava announce two major hires that will oversee agencies involved in Miami-Dade's ***COVID*** response.

Morales -- like Levine Cava, a Democrat and former county commissioner who ran for county mayor himself in 2004 -- announced his exit from the city before Election Day. He's being hired for a new position created as part of Levine Cava's switch from a layer of deputy mayors to "chiefs" overseeing agencies.

Also on Monday, Levine Cava promoted Morris Copeland from director of Juvenile Services to chief community services officer -- a position that will oversee the county's housing and social services departments, Juvenile Services as well as Libraries, Animal Services and Cultural Affairs.

Copeland's hire displaces Michael Spring, who did double-duty under Gimenez as head of cultural affairs and as a deputy overseeing the Libraries and Parks departments. Rachel Johnson, a spokesperson for the new mayor, said Spring would remain as cultural affairs director.

Parks will be part of the Morales portfolio, which includes Miami International Airport and other county airports, along with PortMiami, Transportation and Public Works, the county's trash-hauling division, the Water and Sewer Department, Elections and the arm of county government that includes the building, zoning and permitting division known as Regulatory and Economic Resources.

So far, Levine Cava's representatives have declined to reveal how much the new senior administrators are being paid and the county has not provided documentation sought by record requests that may contain that information.

Morales and Copeland join a senior leadership team that includes J.D. Patterson, the former county police director hired to be chief public safety officer; Ed Marquez, a former Gimenez deputy mayor being retained as chief financial officer; and chief of staff Johanna Cervone.

Levine Cava's statement on the new hires doesn't mention ***COVID***, though the agencies Copeland and Morales supervise are active in the coronavirus response. The county's transit agency went fare-free to try to slow the ***COVID*** spread, Miami-Dade's social services arm runs the emergency meal-delivery service for seniors to discourage them from taking trips to the grocery store, and Regulatory Resources helps enforce emergency ***COVID*** orders.

"Our community faces urgent infrastructure and operations challenges including the need to connect all corners of our county with reliable, efficient public transportation, and upgrading our water system to withstand the impacts of climate change and sea level rise," she said. "Jimmy Morales brings forward-thinking leadership and nearly 25 years of experience in public service and city operations ... to help us tackle these challenges and build a more resilient Miami-Dade for the 21st century."

On Copeland, she said he "has devoted his entire professional life to creating strong social programs to support at-risk youth and their families in our community. In this new role he'll bring his experience and innovative, compassionate leadership" to the agencies he oversees.

**Load-Date:** November 24, 2020

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Miami-Dade commission says no to election for board seat, and poaches budget chief*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:61BH-RJ81-JC3J-X1TK-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

November 19, 2020 Thursday

Copyright 2020 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** miami\_dade

**Length:** 1330 words

**Byline:**  Douglas Hanks

Miami Herald

**Body**

Jose "Pepe" Diaz won the election Thursday to lead the Miami-Dade commission and helped the new board flex its muscles by voting to use appointment powers to fill a vacant seat and by announcing a surprise plan to poach the county's budget director from newly installed Mayor ***Daniella Levine Cava***.

Shortly after a unanimous election as board chairman, Diaz prevailed in a debate on how to fill the District 8 seat Levine Cava had to give up to run for mayor. Her May resignation took effect Monday, and a divided commission voted to reject a special election that could cost more than $1 million in favor of the remaining 12 board members appointing someone next month.

A District 8 election too costly?

"Nobody wants to see another election for a while," said Diaz, an 18-year commissioner elected to his final term in 2018 for the county's District 12 seat, representing the Doral area. He argued against spending more money on an election shortly after the resources and energy expended for the general election that had Miami-Dade voting for president, along with mayor and commission seats.

Commissioners pushing for a special election called it an insult to residents of the South Miami-Dade district to substitute the board's preference over voters' for who will represent the area until 2022.

"No price -- even $1.2 million in a pandemic time -- is too great for democracy," said Commissioner Sally Heyman.

The motion to hold a Jan. 26 election for the District 8 seat failed on a 7-5 vote. Joining Diaz on the no side were Jean Monestime, Rebeca Sosa and four of the five newly elected commissioners: Oliver Gilbert, Keon Hardemon, Kionne McGhee and Raquel Regalado. The fifth new commissioner, René Garcia, voted with Heyman to call the election, along with Eileen Higgins, Joe Martinez and Javier Souto.

Garcia opened his comments with a jab at Levine Cava, who could have given up her seat during the campaign and allowed Miami-Dade to call a special election to coincide with the countywide August primary.

"Why are we in this situation right now?" asked Garcia, who was endorsed by the term-limited commissioner who ran against Levine Cava, Esteban "Steve" Bovo Jr. "A decision was made by the officeholder to not vacate the seat until [after] the election."

Levine Cava: No position on my replacement

Levine Cava didn't take a position on the District 8 decision. An ally is one of the leading contenders for appointment: fellow Democrat Danielle Cohen Higgins, a lawyer whose campaign manager, Christian Ulvert, also ran Levine Cava's successful mayoral run. She's one of four people who filed for the District 8 seat in anticipation of a special election, though they're officially registered to run in 2022.

The other candidates are neighborhood activist Alicia Arellano; John DuBois, the vice mayor of Palmetto Bay; and counselor Leonarda Duran Buike. Rebeca Sosa, the acting chairwoman of the commission until Diaz takes office in January, said the appointment should come from one of the filed candidates. However, commissioners are free to appoint someone else.

The appointment could decide the partisan balance of the officially nonpartisan board, currently split between Democrats and Republicans. With Levine Cava on the board, Democrats had seven members and Republicans five. New Republican commissioner Raquel Regalado replaced Xavier Suarez, an independent.

Commission wants to poach budget director Jennifer Moon

Commissioners met for the first time with the new members, and with Levine Cava's debut in the mayor's chair after swearing-in ceremonies Tuesday.

The meeting also brought a surprise for the new administration when Diaz announced a plan to create a new budget post for the board and Sosa quickly suggested offering it to Jennifer Moon, the county's veteran budget director.

The move sets up a significant shift in budgetary heft from the executive to the legislative side of county government, with Moon the go-to expert on county spending and revenue for more than a decade.

She was demoted from deputy mayor by Levine Cava but assigned to continue overseeing the budget office as Miami-Dade faces the financial hardships caused by the ***COVID***-19 pandemic.

Sosa made the offer when Levine Cava was outside of the chambers. The mayor reappeared during the discussion but didn't speak.

"You come with the connections to the mayor's office, so the mayor's office and our offices can work in conjunction together," Sosa said. Gilbert described the move as trying to win over Moon's affections. "I just got a vision of when I was in fifth grade, will you be my girlfriend? Check yes or no," he said.

The new administration was expected to bring staffing changes, but Moon generated extra speculation after an incident at a fall budget hearing involving Levine Cava.

Levine Cava was the board's top critic of the 2021 budget that then-Mayor Carlos Gimenez and Moon submitted, and was the apparent target of a hot-mic moment during the Sept 17 hearing. When Levine Cava began her critical speech on the budget Sept. 17, the Zoom camera shifted to a masked Moon in a conference room telling people around her: "Behind my ***mask***, I'm saying 'F--- you.'"

Moon apologized and said she wasn't talking about Levine Cava, and the then-commissioner said she believed her. But Levine Cava's campaign manager said "he hoped something more than apology comes of it" and campaign staffers began wearing masks that said: "Under my ***mask***, I'm saying... DLC!"

After Sosa's offer, Moon came to the microphone and left her options open.

"I'm a little embarrassed," she said. "I really appreciate what you all are saying. I really need to talk to my husband and my family. Do I have to say yes right now?" On Friday, Sosa released a memo announcing Moon's hire. "I am pleased to announce that Jennifer Moon has accepted the position offered to her," Sosa wrote.

Levine Cava confirmed Thursday she had demoted Moon, from deputy mayor overseeing transit and elections as well as budget, down to her prior role as budget director. Moon was a central player in Gimenez's ***COVID*** response, overseeing emergency rules put in place for businesses, residents and local governments.

The two met after the commission meeting in Levine Cava's new 29th-floor offices, where Moon also worked under Gimenez.

"She got an offer. So now she has choices," Levine Cava said. "I've talked to her about where she could make the biggest impact in the county. Obviously she has tremendous expertise. I think she can take that expertise and help us as we get through this budget downturn."

The Moon hire gives Diaz a high-profile staff member as the commission navigates dealing with a new mayor. As chairman, he has authority over which pieces of legislation land on the agenda, and which board members receive plum committee assignments. He chose Gilbert as his vice chairman.

Oliver Gilbert is the commission's new vice chairman

Diaz has been raising money in 2020 from county vendors, developers and lobbyists, and using the donations to make contributions to election efforts for several of the new commissioners. Campaign reports show Diaz's political committee, We the People, gave about $275,000 to election efforts for seven commissioners now on the board. That included about $80,000 each to committees backing Hardemon and McGhee, and $70,000 to a committee supporting Regalado.

Diaz was the only nominee for the two-year chairmanship. His election caps a comeback from a 2015 arrest on drunken-driving charges in Key West, when the commissioner was filmed telling a Key West police officer "My career is ended." But he was acquitted of the charge and easily reelected in 2018, and now has two more years before term limits require the former Sweetwater mayor to leave the commission.

"I know it won't be easy moving forward. I know there will be a lot of obstacles in the way," Diaz said after his election Thursday. "Thank you for the confidence you have given me. It is a great honor."

**Load-Date:** November 20, 2020

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Facing COVID surge, Florida mayors ask DeSantis for mask mandate, more local control*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:61B5-40V1-DYJM-M0HX-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

November 18, 2020 Wednesday

Copyright 2020 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** miami\_dade

**Length:** 1300 words

**Byline:**  Martin Vassolo

Miami Herald

**Body**

As the holidays approach -- and threaten to worsen a nationwide coronavirus surge -- the mayors of five Florida cities and municipalities met Wednesday to request that Gov. Ron DeSantis impose a statewide ***mask*** mandate, ramp up the state's testing effort and reinstate the authority of local governments to impose coronavirus restrictions as needed.

The bipartisan coalition of mayors, who largely represent cities in hard-hit South Florida, implored DeSantis to follow the lead of other U.S. governors who have recently imposed new ***COVID*** restrictions as cases continue to rise around the country and in Florida.

"Positive cases are rising steeply and it is spreading everywhere," said Miami Beach Mayor Dan Gelber. "We can't continue the way we're going."

The mayors, who emphasized the need to tamp down what they called an "enormous surge" in coronavirus cases, were all from Miami-Dade and Broward counties with the exception of the mayor of St. Petersburg, who joined the virtual meeting from Florida's west coast. They did not explicitly call for business closures but outlined four demands for the governor: mandating a statewide ***mask*** requirement, allowing local governments to impose ***COVID*** restrictions, improving contact tracing and increasing the state's funding of ***COVID*** testing.

Gelber, whose office organized the meeting, sent DeSantis a letter Wednesday formally requesting the safety measures. He accused DeSantis of pursuing a herd-immunity policy, but remained hopeful that he would change his mind and listen to local leaders.

"We won't need to return to lock-downs if we are allowed to manage the virus through implementation of these best practices," the Democratic mayor wrote. "***Mask*** usage is obviously essential. The data proves that after we implemented it, our community saw a substantial reduction in virus spread. I believe if you were to implement a statewide ***mask*** mandate it would save thousands of lives."

Gelber previously asked DeSantis to impose a ***mask*** mandate in a Sept. 15 letter.

From Alabama to New York -- and regardless of political leanings -- several governors have reimposed safety protocols to counter the uptick. In some states, local governments have considered their own restrictions. In California, for example, more than two dozen counties have moved to limit dine-in service at restaurants and restrict capacity at other businesses.

On Sept. 25, DeSantis signed a "right to work" executive order, ending state and some local ***COVID*** restrictions. That led Miami-Dade County to stop collecting face-***mask*** fines and to reopen its bars and nightclubs. The county successfully fought to keep its midnight ***curfew*** in effect, despite an initial circuit court opinion that sided with the strip club Tootsies in its argument that the county ***curfew*** violated the state executive order.

"The governor didn't just open things up. He flung the door open and said there are no rules anymore," Gelber said.

After leveling off through much of the fall, the number of coronavirus patients admitted to Miami-Dade hospitals began to shoot up in the end of October. During the two-week period from Nov. 2 through Monday, ***COVID***-19 hospitalizations have increased 34%. Over the same two-week period, the state's rate of positive tests went from 6.5% to about 9%.

In addition to Gelber, the mayors at the Wednesday afternoon press conference included Hialeah Mayor Carlos Hernandez, Miami Shores Village Mayor Crystal Wagar, Sunrise Mayor Michael Ryan and St. Petersburg Mayor Rick Kriseman.

All serve in nonpartisan positions. Hernandez, who is a registered Republican, said DeSantis is not following the science in his response to the pandemic and that it would be "disrespectful" for the governor to ignore their call.

"The governor is gambling on this going away or something," he said. "At the end of the day, time is going to prove him wrong or right."

Miami Mayor Francis Suarez, a registered Republican who did not attend the event, is also considered a part of the coalition.

On Monday, on a call with a small group of mayors and public health experts, Suarez presented data that suggested the governor's move to restrict local governments from enforcing ***mask*** mandates may have contributed to the latest ***COVID***-19 surge.

Suarez was joined on the call by Gelber; ***Daniella Levine Cava***, newly elected as Miami-Dade's mayor; and Pinecrest Mayor Joseph Corradino, who was representing the county's League of Cities.

The group agreed that Suarez would try to set up a meeting with DeSantis to present the data and urge him to act.

"I don't think anybody thinks we need to tinker with the ***curfew*** or close schools or anything like that," said Corradino. "Really, what we need to do is just wear the masks."

Levine Cava, who has criticized outgoing County Mayor Carlos Gimenez's approach to the pandemic, has said she plans to "come out swinging" this week in addressing the ongoing crisis. On Tuesday, in an address after taking the oath of office, she announced the appointment of Dr. Peter Paige, a senior executive at Jackson, the county-owned hospital system, to be her administration's chief medical officer.

Levine Cava said she has been trying to get a meeting with DeSantis to pitch a ***COVID*** plan that she and other mayors have crafted. "We want the governor to listen to us," she said Sunday.

Suarez told reporters on Wednesday that he planned to ask DeSantis for more ability to enforce regulations local leaders believe will curb the spread of ***COVID***-19, namely a ***mask*** mandate. City officials previously had the ability to fine people who were not wearing masks in public.

He pointed to data analysis from local public health officials, as well as advice from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, when he suggested that an enforceable ***mask*** order works.

"We've seen that in our own numbers," he said. "We don't need more proof than what we've already observed."

Suarez said if the governor will meet with him, he'll show DeSantis a statistical analysis that shows how ***COVID*** cases increased after DeSantis voided Miami's ***mask*** order. He said he has not yet gotten word if he will get a meeting, but Suarez said he wants to persuade DeSantis to loosen the state's grip on how municipalities can use local laws to combat the virus.

Gelber and Ryan, the Sunrise mayor, said they believe state-funded ***COVID*** testing sites in Miami-Dade and Broward have begun to ramp down. At the Miami Beach Convention Center testing site, the county has filled the gap left by the state, Gelber said.

"The state's decision to roll back availability of testing centers has not simply inconvenienced many Floridians but, more importantly, made it difficult for many to get tested when they most need to," Gelber wrote in the letter. "In many communities, the waits are increasing every day as more people are concerned that they may be infected."

Gelber also said state workers in Miami-Dade who are employed to do contact tracing -- a way of reducing the spread of the disease -- have not been able to effectively get in touch with newly infected residents. During the two-week period ending Nov. 13, he said in his letter, county contact tracers interviewed less than half of infected residents to find their close contacts.

He proposed that DeSantis authorize the use of a contact-tracing app developed by Google and Apple to help curb the spread of the virus.

Kriseman, of St. Petersburg, said he and his fellow mayors hope DeSantis will listen. They did not give the governor a deadline by which to respond to their request.

"Our hope is that he pays attention to the mayors," Kriseman said. "We are the closest to the people. We have to deal with what is happening on the ground each and every day in our communities."

Miami Herald staff writers Aaron Leibowitz and Joey Flechas contributed to this report.

**Load-Date:** November 19, 2020

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Real estate is pumping South Florida's engine. But who's fueling it with cash?*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:61DJ-S211-JC3J-X01K-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

November 18, 2020 Wednesday

Copyright 2020 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** real\_estate\_news

**Length:** 3257 words

**Byline:**  Rebecca San Juan

Miami Herald

**Body**

In easier times, construction financing was generally a routine matter of paperwork.

But in the ***COVID*** age, lenders often are laser-focused on details that previously were rarely even discussed.

That was the experience of Nelson Stabile, a principal with the Miami-based private equity and development firm Integra Investments, who found himself reviewing construction cost analysis and insurance programs with lenders -- even conducting virtual tours -- to them to finance $70.3 million in construction loans for two projects in July and August.

"We had one lender who is keen on physically walking the neighborhoods. We had to basically do everything virtually," Stabile said.

The entire process added a month to the overall development timeline. "Still," said Stabile, "we were fortunate to secure financing amid the pandemic."

Other local developers weren't as lucky. As the pandemic swept the nation, South Florida lenders slowed or halted construction financing, further staunching a development wave that had already begun to ebb. ***COVID***'s impact on brick-and-mortar retail and hospitality brought a full stop to plans for many new shopping centers and hotels; the shift to remote working left banks and other firms wary of new office projects.

But as October and November have rolled around, lenders have warmed to warehouse and residential projects -- provided the developer has a strong track record and a penchant for detail.

That's good news for South Florida's real estate development and construction industries, which employ about 140,000 workers.

"Every construction project is a potential economic engine for the community," said Steve Cohen, senior director of commercial real estate for Synovus, a Columbus, GA-based bank backing South Florida projects. "It creates jobs for architects, engineers, contractors, building supply firms. It creates construction jobs that can last two years or beyond. It provides real estate tax to the community."

Synovus is one of a handful of commercial banks still lending for South Florida projects; others include Wells Fargo, Bank of America, BB&T, Bank OZK and Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce. Private equity firms including Blackstone and Goldman Sachs, family offices and private investors also provide lending for local deals.

One thing all have in common: Stringent requirements. Bank stress tests implemented after the Great Recession have made lenders acutely aware of the need to manage risks.

"Deals have to be fully buttoned up," said Andrew Kurnit, executive director of DWNTWN Realty Advisors. "There is no appetite for risk. The stars have to perfectly align these days for a project to be financed."

Only seasoned developers are making the cut, said Eddy Arriola, chairman and CEO of Apollo Bank. These days, he only looks at projects from developers with more than five years of experience.

"We want multiple successful projects," Arriola said. "As a lender, we want to see how have they responded to a lawsuit, partner issue, managing multiple subcontractors? How do they manage three or four projects at a time? How have they handled hurricane season? There are so many factors that can come up and it's important to see how they handle market forces."

Patrick Ramge, Wells Fargo Florida's senior vice president for commercial real estate, calls it "cycle tested." Ramge wants to see that "they've been through one or five market cycles to show that they have behavioral performance, or acted accordingly to whatever obligations that they had on financing circumstances. It comes down to making sure that we understand our clients very well."

A successful track record shows banks that borrowers have their priorities straight, Cohen said.

"We're in the business to rent money, not to give money away," Cohen said. "Those borrowers that come with a lot of experience know how to anticipate the risks that are inherent in development. If they know the risks, they know how to protect themselves as the investor and therefore they protect us as the lender."

Daniel-Kodsi.jpg"This is where reputation and execution matters," said Dan Kodsi, CEO of the Paramount Miami developer Royal Palm Companies. Above: Kodsi stood in front of Paramount Miami Worldcenter when the 60-story condo tower was under construction. It was completed in 2018.

As a result, big firms generally have an edge, said Dan Kodsi, CEO of the Paramount Miami developer Royal Palm Companies. "This is where reputation and execution matters."

Key to Re|source newsletter signup

Industrial takes center stage

Market forces also matter. This fall, that means warehouse is pulling in the green, said Sebastian Juncadella, an associate with Coral Gables-based commercial brokerage Fairchild Partners.

Juncadella credits the warehouse market's relatively unscathed performance.

"It is a sector that has done relatively well in terms of vacancy, loss of tenants, and defaults compared to other real estate sectors, such as office and retail space," he said.

The pandemic has accelerated already-vibrant e-commerce -- resulting in increased demand by Amazon, logistics companies and existing industrial tenants, said Ramge.

As a result, lenders are competing for industrial projects, Arriola said. "Industrial is super hot, because Miami is booming. There is so much competition that we're seeing alternative money, such as equity with debt, and big banks [in the space]."

Still, the industrial boom won't last forever, noted Suzanne Hollander, a lawyer and professor at Florida International University's College of Business Hollo School of Real Estate. "But I expect we are going to see a pause in lending. If a developer had it built to suit, it's still seen as risky."

Residential? It depends

That doesn't mean residential is out in the cold. Multi-family rentals, condos and single-family home developments can still be good bets, said Arriola. For Apollo Bank, the sweet spot is condo and single-family developments with dwellings listed for $700,000 or less, and rental apartments leasing for less than $3,000 per month.

"South Florida is in need of housing. If there is something more people can afford, we want to lend," Arriola said.

Bank OZK, too, is backing construction for apartment rentals. "Everyone needs a place to sleep at night," said Brannon Hamblen, Bank OZK president.

Synovus was encouraged by a high collection rate -- about 90% -- by apartment landlords as tenants continued to pay their rents during the pandemic. Like others, his bank also anticipates population growth as more people abandon northern cities for South Florida's warm weather and low tax rates.

"Our clients have a long-term view on investment strategy," Cohen said. "To start a project today, units won't be delivered for 18 to 24 months. By then, there should be a solution for the pandemic. The other thing that we see is that apartment complexes that were recently completed have been leasing up in a strong way."

And as always with real estate, the key is location, location, location, said Carolyn Whatley, managing director of broker Berkadia Commercial Mortgage, by email.

"Specific to the pandemic, we pay close attention to markets with a concentration of a high-risk employment base being impacted by the pandemic. This requires a deep analysis on the market's past resilience and current performance, using our proprietary data analytical tools. Still, this brings us back to the fundamentals -- 'Is there demand?' 'Is there household growth?' 'Is the location good?'"

While starts on multifamily condo and rental projects were down significantly in the third quarter -- with 2,055 units in 2020, down almost 38% from 2019 -- they've picked up since October, according to Ned Murray, associate director of FIU's Jorge M. Pérez Metropolitan Center. Construction starts already are set to be up about 30% in the fourth quarter of 2020 over the same period in 2019. More than half are in the city of MIami.

"The city housing market is still attractive to developers and investors," Murray said. "The question going forward will be the absorption rates of these new developments. That will determine whether a slowdown is occurring."

Still, bankers see uncertainty in the residential market. As a result, they're charging a premium -- and demanding developers shoulder a greater share of the burden.

Prior to the pandemic, lenders were looking for a developer to put up 30% to 34% in equity on a project. Now the threshold has edged up to 35% to 45%, said Stabile.

His firm, Integra Investments, secured financing for two affordable multifamily projects in July and August. At Las Brisas Trace in Brownsville, Integra put down $26.3 million in equity and received a $24.8 million construction loan. In Allapattah, the company put down $18.7 million and landed a tax-exempt bond construction loan for its $58 million senior housing development, Mosaico. It is working in partnership with the Elderly Housing Development & Operations Corporation.

Mosaico Groundbreaking.jpgIntegra Investments, secured financing for two affordable multifamily projects in July and August, including Mosaico. Construction started on Mosaico, pictured above, in October. From left to right: Jake Morrow, Interurban Principal; Roland Broussard, EHDOC; Melanie Ribeiro, President & CEO, EHDOC; ***Daniella Levine Cava***, Mayor of Miami-Dade County; Paulo Melo, Integra Investments Principal; Nelson Stabile, Integra Investments Principal and Victor Ballestas, Integra Investments Principal.

Despite ongoing demand for affordable and workforce housing, Mosaico may be one of last new projects of its kind for the foreseeable future, experts say.

Developers can earn higher profits through other types of residential projects, said Ken H. Johnson, a real estate economist and professor at Florida Atlantic University, via email. "Margins remain relatively small for developers. Therefore, developers continue to build in the higher margin markets and not in the area of workforce housing."

"The time to solve housing-affordability problems is when the housing market is at the bottom of a housing cycle... when local governments can move to acquire land rights and future concessions from developers," he said. The market is too strong now for that to work, he said.

Federal, state, and local incentives may make a difference, said Hollander. "There is a demand for affordable housing; there is going to be an increased demand as there is more unemployment. Developers can make a profit...even with moratoriums or unemployment, the developer still gets paid because the government pays a portion of the rent."

SMALL LOANS, LESS RISK

For some lenders, smaller is better.

"Smaller firms are doing a lot of the business right now,"said Heather Zatik, senior vice president and senior commercial loan officer at Arkansas-based Centennial Bank, which is active in South Florida. "The huge developers may be putting projects on hold, depending on what the projects are. The smaller developers can get financing as long as they have a portfolio. As long as it's a reputable company, this is the time that they can get financing."

Cordelia Anderson agrees.

The founder of Miami-based I Heart Real Estate LLC lends only to small developers seeking a one-stop option for brokerage, property management and other services.

"We're seeing more small developers," Anderson said. "The money is there. Lenders have this money and they want to lend it. As long as the numbers make sense -- the borrowers have some skin in the game -- lenders are lending."

MIA\_GARDENS\_STILLS\_DAV15A view of the Sunshine State Arch from the expressway in Miami Gardens, Florida, on Thursday, October 15, 2020. The structure was finished in 1964 and has been memorialized in the official seal of the City of Miami Gardens after incorporating in 2003.

A third of her loans are for new construction. She's particularly keen on multifamily developments in Miami Gardens, Liberty City, and near downtown Fort Lauderdale.

"Those are good areas to get rent out of," Anderson said. "The value is going up, because of all the areas around it. The numbers make sense."

The size of the deal matters more than the size of the firm, said Jay Jacob, managing partner at the Davie-based private lending firm Community Capital Holding Corp.

"South Florida has a lot of folks that have a lot of real estate experience. It's more about the deal size and scope of the project," Jacob said.

His firm often lends to developers seeking around $5 million for a construction or bridge loan. Those have included Gregg Covin, co-developer to One Thousand Museum, for Covin's spec single-family home developments in Miami Beach, and Current Capital, for projects in Hollywood.

Lenders consider loans of $1 million small, a deal small if they lend about a million, medium-sized if it's between $5 to $9 million medium, and over $10 million large.

Community Capital has always preferred loans below $10 million. "We don't like to play in large deals," he said. "We like to stay in the medium range to spread out credit risk among many deals."

Small-scale residential projects targeted to upscale buyers are finding success with individual investors, say lenders.

AI7A4590.jpgMG Developer received $16.15 million in construction financing from a New York-based lender for its projects Beatrice Row and Biltmore Row. Above: MG Developer CEO Alirio Torrealba on the construction site of Biltmore Row.

Coral Gables-based MG Developer secured a $16.15 million equity financing loan in October to complete a five-unit townhouse project, Beatrice Row, and and 10-unit Biltmore Row, both near downtown Coral Gables. Jeffrey Donnelly and Dmitry Levkov of Colliers International helped MG find an investor in New York. MG Developer spent a total of $60 million, from land acquisition to construction, on both projects.

"Florida is an attractive place for investors from New York and Chicago, because the population keeps on growing," said Alirio Torrealba, founder and CEO of MG Development.

MG feels confident it can find backing for two additional Gables projects, a single-family home development and a rental apartment project. The details for both are still being finalized.

"We are not looking for financing yet," Torrealba said, "but we feel that the projects are viable and we won't have an issue finding financing."

Retail, office

When it comes to retail and office projects, nearly all banks and lenders are giving a thumbs down as they wait to see how occupancy and the remote-work trend progresses

"Retail, office, hospitality -- no not doing it," said Camilo Niño, CEO and founder of LV Lending, a branch of the Miami and Medellín-based Linkvest Capital. "Eventually we will, but right now it is difficult to measure the risk."

Says Bank OZK's Hamblen, "There's a lot more work from home. [But] there are some businesses that say it's not easy to train new hires or build corporate culture working remotely."

Arriola agrees. "On office, our phone is not ringing.

"For retail, I don't think anyone is thinking about new construction, because there is going to be at some point next year a giant shift. Because of vacancies and consumer interest, I don't know if I'm going to go shopping for two hours or am I going to be so used to online shopping? Am I going to want to go out to restaurants or keep cooking at home?"

Centennial Bank has continued financing some commercial real estate projects, but with 5% to 10% less leverage than pre-pandemic, said Zatik. While once it financed 70% to 75% of a project, now Centennial limits lending up to 60%.

Synovus is still considering some retail projects, Cohen said, especially those with grocery anchors and service-oriented tenants, including nail salons and restaurants or delis.

Above all, it looks at the project's location.

"In general, real estate is a long-term asset," Cohen said. "Owners of real estate have a longer-term perspective. Good tenants who are popular today may not be popular 10 years today. If the center is well located, if the space is going to be attractive to future users...that makes us want to lend on that property."

Financing is beginning to ease for hospitality -- especially when hotels are part of a larger project.

Kodsi is still looking for a $250 million loan for Legacy Hotel & Residences at Paramount Miami Worldcenter, a mixed-use project that includes hospitality, a medical center and residential. "Every lender says the same thing: 'If it were just hospitality, we wouldn't give you a term sheet.' "

Apollo Bank is a bit keener on hospitality, especially when it comes to franchised hotels. It is providing financing for four projects on the west coast and northern region of Florida.

Fontainebleau new development.PNGThe Fontainebleau hired the Coral Gables-based architect firm Nichols Brosch Wurst Wolfe & Associates to design the project. Above: A rendering of the building submitted in the plans to the Miami Beach Historic Preservation Board.

"Florida is expected to do well, because of taxes, sunshine and Latin America," Arriola said. "With that comes people that are moving here and people who are going to work here. We are seeing more people that need to visit Florida for work, and tastes are changing. People don't want a lot of human interaction; they are ok with less services."

Despite layoffs earlier this year, Fontainebleau Development is moving forward with its Fontainebleau Miami Beach expansion, said Brett Mufson, president and CIO of the Miami-based development firm Fontainebleau Development. It is finalizing the design details and obtaining permits.

But it's not yet at the money stage. "We are not ready to put a shovel to the ground for the Fontainebleau expansion," Mufson said. "We wouldn't start anything that we couldn't get financing for."

Next for lending

As to when lending is likely to increase, that answer may depend on medical advances.

Synovus' Cohen is waiting for a time "when we all feel more comfortable getting on airplanes, going to sporting events, going out to dinner. Making sure that we do that responsibly is going to be key to the success of our economy, its the key to the success of our real estate market."

Wells Fargo is evaluating projects on a case-by-case basis overlaid with a wait-and-see approach.

"We just need to see things play out locally, nationally, internationally as we learn to live with ***COVID***," said Ramge. "Each asset type is different. You are going to examine the merits of each transaction and make a decision on that -- sponsorship, market forecast, and the project [itself]."

For Bank OZK's Hamblen, last week's upbeat news about promising immunizations was a welcome sign.

"The ***vaccine*** would certainly give people more clarity and confidence around getting back to work. That's significant for a market like New York. It would also give clarity and confidence around traveling, which would be good for hospitality."

One thing is for certain -- businesses relationships will be more important than ever.

Community Capital's Jacob finds that developers are now willing to pay a higher interest rate to work with a time-tested lender.

"We find that when we establish a relationship with the client they see how easy it is, cutting out the bureaucracy," he said. "That velocity of the project moving forward, which creates efficiency, matters."

"You can get the lowest interest rate at a bank," said LV Lending's Niño. "But when something like this happens the banks cut you off....Developers are going to value more the institutions that are going to work with them even through a difficult time."

**Load-Date:** January 15, 2021

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Levine Cava, Miami-Dade's new mayor, plans to 'come out swinging' against COVID-19*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:619N-VWP1-DYJM-M038-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

November 16, 2020 Monday

Copyright 2020 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** miami\_dade

**Length:** 1518 words

**Byline:**  Douglas Hanks

Miami Herald

**Body**

Two days before becoming Miami-Dade mayor, ***Daniella Levine Cava*** and aides pulled up to a Liberty City gathering of campaign workers and local Democratic Party leaders.

Sunday's thank-you gathering turned into a small rally against gentrification when a man wheeled a wireless speaker to the lawn and handed the mayor-elect a microphone.

"We can't just be building new things. We've got to be helping people who live in the homes right now. I'm all about neighborhood planning at the neighborhood level," Levine Cava said, standing before a backdrop of herself, a campaign mural featuring the candidate. "We'll find a way. With your help. And with God's help."

Elected after a campaign centered on her status as a Democrat in a blue-leaning county, Levine Cava, 65, now faces the challenge of scoring victories on the governance side of county politics as she succeeds Republican Carlos Gimenez as the government's top administrator.

levine cava

An environmentalist who donned a sequined "Water Warrior" cape for campaign ads on climate change, she inherits the nearly $900 million Water and Sewer budget that's at the center of her plan to accelerate converting septic tanks to the municipal sewer system before sea-level rise swamps them.

An outsider during her two terms on the county commission, Levine Cava was left out of leadership posts and committee chairs by the board she now must corral for legislative wins.

"I think the pandemic does make it difficult to build relationships with new commissioners," said Raquel Regalado, a former school board member and one of five incoming commissioners elected to seats left open by the first wave of retirements required by term-limit rules voters approved in 2012. "In a normal world, we'd all be sitting down and having coffee with her. And she'd be building a coalition."

A former nonprofit executive and social-work administrator, Levine Cava has staked much of her success on building consensus.

Gimenez spent most of 2020 in a public feud with local mayors over ***COVID*** orders and CARES Act funding. The day after she beat fellow commissioner Esteban "Steve" Bovo Jr. by eight points in the mayoral election, Levine Cava joined Miami Mayor Francis Suarez for a Miami food-distribution event.

'I do have a bully pulpit'

Discussing the importance of early childhood learning, Levine Cava offered no specific fixes but said she wants to convene various agencies, the school system and nonprofits to tackle the problem.

"I don't have the levers of these funding sources. But I do have a bully pulpit," she said. "And I do have a vision, and I do have my collaborative ways. I'm hopeful in my administration we'll be able to bring all of these entities to the table."

A married grandmother of two, Levine Cava looks back at her time as a child-advocate lawyer as the moment she saw government do the most good. She worked for the state agency that represented the legal interest of children in trouble, and later went on to run the county foster-child program after Hurricane Andrew in the 1990s.

Intervening for a child in a dangerous home or one desperate for services was "in many cases the difference between life and death."

"It wasn't like you could solve all of the problems for these children, who obviously had been born into some truly difficult circumstances," she said. "But you could truly make a monumental difference in each child's life."

A leading critic of Gimenez's approach to ***COVID***-19, Levine Cava takes office in the midst of what county authorities say is a surge in cases and facing a Thanksgiving holiday that's poised to make the spread even worse.

Levine Cava said her first major appointment as mayor would fulfill a campaign promise to establish a chief medical officer for the county -- someone who could advise her on ***COVID***-19, and serve as the administration's voice on the science behind the pandemic.

"I think we have a short window to try and tamp it down," she said. "I'm going to come out swinging this week."

MIA\_LEVINE\_CAVA\_DAV4County Mayor-elect ***Daniella Levine Cava*** takes a selfie with Cuthbert "Broadway" Harewood Jr. near a mural designed in her honor, as she stops in the Liberty City neighborhood of Miami on a tour of Miami-Dade on Sunday, Nov. 15, 2020. Levine Cava becomes Miami-Dade's first woman mayor on Tuesday, Nov. 17.

Nearly two weeks after being elected mayor of Florida's largest local government, Levine Cava said she still hasn't spoken to Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis.

Orders from the Republican governor forced Miami-Dade to reopen nightclubs and end virtual commission meetings, and Levine Cava said she's been trying to get a meeting with the state leader to pitch a ***COVID*** plan from her and city mayors. "We want the governor to listen to us," she said.

Miami still ignoring county ***curfew***

She faces local ***COVID*** political challenges, too: The county's midnight ***curfew*** survived a court challenge on appeal, but Miami still won't enforce it under Suarez. "That's a conversation we're having," Levine Cava said.

As Miami-Dade's first female mayor, Levine Cava said she'll also have the first female security detail. She said she requested a female county police officer be assigned as her driver, and has begun the interview process.

Levine Cava ran on making Miami-Dade government more responsive to the needy. She takes office as the county burns through much of the nearly $1 billion in federal ***COVID***-relief dollars that have sheltered the budget from plunging sales and hotel taxes.

Gimenez left her with a budget with revenue shortfalls in the coming years, and that's with property-tax revenues still growing in the aftermath of the ***COVID***-19 crisis. Should values take more of a hit, the situation will be worse.

MIA\_LEVINE\_CAVA\_DAV12County Mayor-elect ***Daniella Levine Cava*** speaks with constituents near a mural designed in her honor as she stops in the Liberty City neighborhood of Miami on a tour of Miami-Dade on Sunday, Nov. 15, 2020. Levine Cava becomes Miami-Dade's first woman mayor on Tuesday, Nov. 17.

"I am going to start talking about austerity," Levine Cava said during a break between stops Sunday on a tour that took her from farm country in South Miami-Dade to a reunion of young campaign workers in Miami Gardens. "There will be some very tough decisions. But I'm going to bring everyone along with me."

She said she hopes to enjoy more commission support than she did as a sitting member of the board, where she wasn't picked to run committees or elected to serve as chair. "The commission was kind of right leaning," said former commissioner Juan C. Zapata, a Republican on the nonpartisan board until 2016. "Here's this new commissioner, kind of left leaning. It caused some friction."

A new seat for the mayor in commission chambers

Levine Cava's debut meeting as mayor will find her physically in a lower position than Gimenez. A new ***COVID***-safety design by acting chairwoman Rebeca Sosa moves the mayor from the commission dais to a seat in the well of the chambers, leaving board members to look down when the mayor speaks.

Along with commission politics, Levine Cava must navigate the expectations of the liberal groups and youth activists who helped fuel the first mayoral campaign to qualify for the ballot through a petition drive.

This year a coalition of activist groups organized members to oppose a Gimenez plan to spend about $400 million upgrading the county's jail system as part of a campaign to shift tax dollars from law enforcement to social services. The movement included Catalyst Miami, the nonprofit Levine Cava founded in 1996 and then left to run for county commission in 2014.

MIA\_LEVINE\_CAVA\_DAV1 (2)County Mayor-elect ***Daniella Levine Cava*** speaks with constituents while making a stop at Tequeno Mania in Doral for a quick snack, as she tours Miami-Dade on Sunday, Nov. 15, 2020. Levine Cava becomes Miami-Dade's mayor on Tuesday, Nov. 17.

The jail plan remains on the drawing board, and Levine Cava said she's prepared to advance a plan to replace a county pretrial detention center that's in such disrepair she considers it "inhumane." At the same time, she said she'll insist her Corrections director find ways to reduce the number of nonviolent offenders housed in county jails.

"I'm not satisfied with their projections," she said. "There's work to be done. They say they've been innovative. And they have been. I don't take that away for a minute. But we need to keep going."

At a Sunday stop in a Miami Gardens campaign office rented through a joint agreement with the Democratic Party, Levine Cava met with a group of volunteers and staffers in their 20s and 30s.

"We need change in our community," said Diaundrea Sherill, 33, who ran the Miami Gardens office. "Yes, we elected the first female mayor. But she's coming with change."

Another volunteer, Francesca Hawthorne, 32, said she expects some friction between what Levine Cava delivers as mayor and what her younger supporters want.

"I think there's no doubt there's going to be a difficult conversation," she said. "The fact that Daniella's here to have those difficult conversations is the first step."

**Load-Date:** November 16, 2020

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Legislators return. Will anyone own Florida's COVID response? Is there going to be a recovery plan?*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:619G-J2M1-JC3J-X01K-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

November 15, 2020 Sunday

Copyright 2020 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** politics\_policy\_in\_sunshine\_state

**Length:** 1453 words

**Byline:**  Mary Ellen Klas

Newsletters |

**Body**

It's Monday, Nov. 16 and legislators return to Tallahassee tomorrow to swear in newly elected lawmakers and elect new presiding officers. After a conclusive election, there is no suspense.

That ended last week when, after three days of a painstaking recount, Republican Ileana Garcia defeated Democratic incumbent José Javier Rodríguez in the race for Senate District 37 by a mere 34 votes. Faced with what appeared to be questionable tactics involving a third-party candidate, Rodríguez called for an investigation into possible elections fraud.

New officers: But Republicans increased their margin to 4 votes in the 40-member Senate and Wilton Simpson, a Republican businessman from Trilby, will be sworn in as the next Senate president. Chris Sprowls, a Republican lawyer from Palm Harbor will be named the next House Speaker. Gary Farmer, a lawyer from Fort Lauderdale, will be the new Senate Democratic leader and Evan Jenne of Dania Beach and Bobby Dubose of Fort Lauderdale will be joint Democratic leaders in the House.

The entire affair will last just two hours, but there will be some firsts. Senators are required to wear masks, limit visitors in the gallery and practice social distancing in an attempt to stave off the coronavirus.

WHAT WE'RE WATCHING

No ***COVID*** urgency: Florida's Legislature last met on March 19 and is only one of seven states in the nation that have not met since then to address ***COVID***-related issues. In some years, legislators have expanded the organization session to conduct committee hearings or call a special session. But this year, after months of avoiding any public association with the coronavirus during a bitter election cycle, the Republican-led House and Senate have no plans to elevate the issue now.

This is despite a state budget deficit, an unemployment system under duress, and the fact that the state's ***COVID*** response appears scattershot and under wraps. ***Vaccine*** distribution plans are incomplete but lawmakers have announced there will be no meetings, in person or virtually, until January. And there is no talk of addressing recovery.

Highest report since July: Remember those people who claimed all the talk of the coronavirus was just because of the election? Well, that didn't exactly hold up. We're still talking about the coronavirus because cases are still rising, and tourists are still not traveling enough. On Sunday, the state reported 10,105 new ***COVID*** cases, the most since July 25, for a total exceeding 885,000.

Test case for herd immunity? Is Florida the nation's test case for ***COVID*** herd immunity? Whether Floridians know it or not, Gov. Ron DeSantis is pursuing a policy that will allow the virus to spread freely in the state until most of the population becomes infected -- or is vaccinated -- while attempting to protect those thought to be most vulnerable.

The problem, according to public health experts we talked to, is there is no way to be sure that the vulnerable are protected under the state's current policies and "extraordinary numbers of people are going to die from this illness before immunity is achieved in the population." What will it take to achieve herd immunity in Florida? Three times as many people would have to be infected, or vaccinated, as have been infected today. The expected death toll would likely to triple as well.

Deciding who in Florida gets ***vaccine***: Last week provided a ray of hope when Pfizer announced it will pursue expedited approval for its coronavirus ***vaccine*** after preliminary results showed it was 90% effective. According to a draft report from the Florida Department of Health, about 3.5 million Floridians, mostly healthcare providers, medically vulnerable and first responders, could be given priority status when the first doses of the ***vaccine*** arrive in the state. But questions remain unanswered: Will the state even get that many doses? And who decides where the first ones go?

WHAT WE'RE TALKING ABOUT

IMG\_FloridaMonkeys.JPG\_5\_1\_0VF1QARC\_L440544413.JPGFlorida has a strange string of invasive species, but the most head-scratching may carry deadly diseases: monkeys. The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission is warning residents to stay away from Rhesus Macaques; they may carry the herpes B virus.

Monkeys, really: Before we turn to politics, you've got to read this story. Did you know that Miami-Dade is a virtual hub for research on monkeys and a bunch of them are being used by Florida labs doing research on a ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine***? A lawsuit over a shipment from Africa brought the monkey business into the spotlight.

Does the gov retaliate? Democratic mayor of Miami Beach, Dan Gelber, said last week that a state lawsuit filed against his city for a series of sewer breaks is "obviously politically motivated" because he has openly criticized the governor for his handling of the ***COVID***-19 pandemic.

The rare lawsuit by the state against a city was filed by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection. It accuses the city of breaking state law in connection with the accidental rupturing of three sewer lines between July 2019 and last March that dumped about 1.7 million gallons of wastewater into Biscayne Bay.

Eviction fallout: Meanwhile, the economic and social fallout of the virus' impact continues to take its toll. Miami-Dade Mayor Carlos Gimenez last week gave police the green light to resume evictions filed before the coronavirus emergency began on March 13.

Gimenez, whose term expires on Tuesday, had planned to resume processing pre-***COVID*** evictions in September but backed off the change after the news became public. Gimenez, who was elected to Congress on Nov. 3, will be replaced by ***Daniella Levine Cava***, who is sworn in on Tuesday.

Citizen shooters: Remember that plan by DeSantis to crack down on "violent and disorderly assemblies" in response to police-brutality protests? It turns out his office has drafted the "anti-mob" legislation and his idea is that lawmakers should expand Florida's Stand Your Ground law. Critics say if it passes, the idea will allow armed citizens to shoot suspected looters or anyone engaged in "criminal mischief" that disrupts a business.

Still trying to make sense of this election? Much of the Florida focus in the wake of the election has been on Trump's stunning improvement with Hispanic voters in Miami-Dade County. But according to a Miami Herald analysis of Hispanic-majority voting precincts in Orange and Osceola counties, two Central Florida counties with the largest Puerto Rican communities in the state, Trump also made unexpected gains in a community where he is broadly disliked.

Then there's Miami's Cuban-American comeback: Miami-Dade voters this year reversed years of Democratic gains and restored Cuban-American Republican hegemony in Florida's most populous county. Cuban-American Republicans in Miami-Dade County won races for Congress, state House and state Senate in the Nov. 3 elections, reversing losses from 2018.

You ready for 2024? Within minutes of TV networks calling the 2020 presidential election for Democratic nominee Joe Biden, an online video ad dropped that took aim at U.S. Sen. Marco Rubio. It was the first salvo in the battle for 2024 when Rubio and Republican Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis will both likely be on the ballot, along with Republican incumbents for the statewide positions of attorney general and chief financial officer. The cast of potential challengers is already emerging, and it's growing. Take a look.

Epstein details emerge: Buried in a 350-page report looking at a U.S. attorney's mishandling of the Jeffrey Epstein cases are some previously unknown details about Department of Justice handling of the case. Among them: the FBI wanted to arrest Epstein while he was judging a beauty pageant but the plan was overruled by former U.S. Attorney Alexander Acosta.

A Justice Department review of the case, obtained by the Miami Herald, found that Acosta used "poor judgment" when he chose not to prosecute the Palm Beach billionaire on federal sex-trafficking charges and instead let him plead guilty to a state offense of soliciting young girls for sex. While the report also concluded that the department attorneys did not engage in professional misconduct, it did conclude "that the victims were not treated with the forthrightness and sensitivity expected by the Department."

Stay safe all and remember, the Miami Herald needs your support if we are to continue to supply the meaningful local journalism you count on during these unprecedented times. To support vital reporting such as this, please consider a subscription for unlimited digital access.

Know someone who'd like to get this? Send this to a friend to receive our weekly newsletter on politics and policy.

**Load-Date:** November 16, 2020

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Red state Florida, blue party woes, GOP silence and COVID confusion*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6181-D4F1-DYJM-M0C9-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

November 9, 2020 Monday

Copyright 2020 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** politics\_policy\_in\_sunshine\_state

**Length:** 2140 words

**Byline:**  Mary Ellen Klas

Newsletters |

**Body**

It's Monday, Nov. 9. Election Day has passed but it's not quite time for Florida to exhale. Tropical Storm Eta is here.

Thousands were already without power late Sunday as the storm approached South Florida and wind damage and flooding fears mounted. The Miami Herald is right there with you to provide the most recent updates.

It is 2020: A brutal late-season storm that's taken aim at two continents seems in keeping with 2020. Here are a few other surprises that arrived election week:

1. The post-Election Day drama was not about Florida;

2. The state solidified its place as a narrow red state with a blue-collar soul; and

3. While Florida's 29 electoral votes were not enough to return President Donald Trump to the White House, his coattails and the coalition he assembled to nearly triple his margin over Hillary Clinton in 2016 has reshaped Florida politics.

Let's break it down.

More than 11 million Floridians cast ballots on Tuesday, a 77% turnout that registers as the second highest in state history -- behind 1992 which was before the state expanded its voter registration outreach.

After former Vice President Joe Biden was declared the winner of the presidential election Saturday, supporters gathered in downtown Miami to celebrate with pots, pans and flags. By contrast, in Miami-Dade's suburbs, a few hundred Trump supporters gathered outside La Carreta restaurant in Olympia Heights to extol the incumbent, praise Trump's victory in Florida and protest what they consider electoral fraud.

Trump expanded base: Trump defeated Biden in the state by 3.4 percentage points which is the Florida equivalent of a landslide. Across the state, Trump had a higher margin of victory than he did in 2016 in at least 50 of Florida's 67 counties, according to a Miami Herald analysis.

Biden builds support: Vice President Joe Biden improved on Clinton's performance among the state's White voters, exit polling showed, with 38% support versus Clinton's 32%. And with Black voters, exit polls put Biden at a dominant 89%, up from Clinton's 84%.

Those gains helped Biden improve on his numbers in Orange and Duval counties. Biden also demonstrated that Duval has gone blue, winning by three percentage points and marking the first time a Democratic presidential candidate had won Duval since Jimmy Carter in 1976.

Miami-Dade triumph: Polls showed Trump winning about 47% of the Hispanic vote in Florida compared to Biden's 52%, a substantial bump for Trump over 2016 and a key reason he won Florida. The largest swing in Trump's direction was in Miami-Dade County, where Clinton won by 30 percentage points in 2016. Trump shaved his deficit with Biden substantially in what appears to be a swing of some 200,000 votes.

Trump played a base strategy throughout the state and in Miami-Dade, the state's most populous county, he expanded that base by tailoring his messaging to non-Cuban Hispanics, many of whom are registered with neither the Republican nor Democratic parties. It worked, with some analysts speculating Trump may have won as much as half of the county's Nicaraguans, Colombians, Puerto Ricans and Venezuelan voters.

WHAT WE'RE TALKING ABOUT

What's next for the GOP? Despite Trump's apparent defeat nationally, his big victory in Florida should serve as a lesson that the GOP can be a "big tent" party, said Susie Wiles, Trump's top Florida campaign strategist in an open memo laying out the strategy used to get Trump reelected.

Wiles wrote that their playbook should be the "model for other states" and that it focused on non-traditional niche voters, "including conservative Jewish voters, parents of school-aged children attending the state's charter schools, Hispanics (including non-Cuban Hispanics), and Black voters in targeted Florida counties."

Rush to defend Trump: Let's hope the future GOP also reexamines what happens when they don't correct reckless and deceptive behavior. For example, in the early hours of Wednesday morning, the president prematurely claimed that he'd won the election and, without evidence, said there were "improperly cast ballots" in states that were still counting.

As if to underscore that Florida's GOP is the party of Trump, several of the state's most powerful GOP politicians came to Trump's defense. The list included the Florida line-up of 2024 presidential hopefuls: U.S. Marco Rubio, U.S. Sen. Rick Scott and Gov. Ron DeSantis.

Unsubstantiations: By Thursday night, the president held a White House news conference and made a historic statement: "If you count the legal votes, I easily win." He offered no evidence that any counted votes were illegal, and his campaign has yet to supply that evidence. He then called it a "fraud on the public" and attempted to build a conspiracy with no proof, involving Democrats, polling site workers, the media and "Big Tech," claiming there was an effort to keep his supporters from turning out to vote. He also made no mention of the fact that if that was true, how had he won Florida?

Bondi buys it: One of the central players in Trump's effort to sow doubt in the American election system was Pam Bondi, once Florida's top law enforcement official, who emerged at a Philadelphia news conference last week to make the unfounded claims of voter fraud.

Leadership silence: What was the reaction of Florida's Republican establishment to the president's questioning the sanctity of the election without evidence? Silence. Shouldn't Republicans who were either elected or reelected using the same democratic process as the president have an obligation to speak up and either accept what the president was saying or reject it? More silence.

Aware of his power over many Americans, not one Florida official raised their voice when Trump said legal vote counting was illegal.

On Saturday, former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush spoke up and acknowledged Biden's victory. By Sunday, former President George W. Bush released a statement that also congratulated Biden, said the election was "fundamentally fair" and "its outcome is clear."

Down-ballot carnage: Democrats did succeed in forcing Trump to defend Florida, spending more time and resources in this battleground than Wiles may have wanted. But it was little comfort for Florida Democrats who got clobbered down the ballot, losing possibly three incumbents --two in Congress and potentially an incumbent state senator -- and two open state House seats they thought they could flip to blue.

Democratic legislative candidates we talked to were not happy, and described being blindsided by poor polling, bad strategy and ill-advised messaging. In the postmortem examination of their bruising defeat, many Democrats suggested that the party should have aligned itself more with the minimum wage amendment, instead of trying not to insult their business-backed donor class.

Blue-collar soul: On the day when Floridians delivered a decisive defeat of Democrats down the ticket, just over 60% of Floridians voted to raise the minimum wage to $15 per hour by 2026. That was about 720,000 more votes than Trump got and a sign that voters who sympathize with Florida's working class are a majority -- and a good number are clearly split-ticket voters.

MIA\_Trump\_Supporters\_Rally\_ (11)'MAGA Man' attends a rally supporting President Donald Trump outside of La Carreta in west Miami-Dade County on Saturday, Nov. 7, 2020. A large crowd of Trump supporters arrived to the rally after former vice-president Joe Biden won the presidential election.

Socialist attacks: Democrats also complained that they failed to effectively counter the drumbeat of attacks from the GOP that Democrats are socialists. The Trump campaign's socialism rhetoric stoked fears and played out on several fronts, much of it in Spanish: in the traditional form of TV ads, mailers and rallies, as well as on the newer frontier of social media.

South Florida's Hispanic voters seemed to be particularly receptive to the claims. In districts where Democrats had won easily two and four years earlier while running on mostly moderate platforms, voters not only rejected Biden, they also rejected Democrats down the ballot. These losses will be particularly painful in Tallahassee, which faces a redistricting year next year.

21 vote margin: We are headed for a recount in the race for Senate District 37, where incumbent Democratic Sen. José Javier Rodríguez is hoping to retain his seat from Republican challenger, Latinas for Trump founder Ileana Garcia. Garcia, a former television personality, is ahead by 21 votes. If she wins, the GOP-controlled Senate will increase its majority to 24-16.

Dems bright spot: Not all was a loss for Democrats in Miami-Dade on Tuesday. ***Daniella Levine Cava*** was elected Miami-Dade mayor, the first woman to win the office and the first candidate without Hispanic roots to hold the seat since the early 1990s. She replaces the current term-limited mayor, Carlos Gimenez, who has held the post for nine years. She defeated fellow commissioner Esteban "Steve" Bovo Jr., a Cuban-American Republican who embraced Trump.

Felon confusion: As the pandemic led voters across the nation to cast their ballots by mail in historic numbers, we also learned that many states did not have the VBM operation at the scale of Florida and could learn from it going forward.

But for all the accolades Florida earned on Election Day, the state dodged a major controversy with the way it managed felons voting. For months, supervisors were often left without direction about how to handle the conflicting legal interpretations over the implementation of the constitutional amendment to restore felons voting rights.

They alternately were told to start removing felons from voting rolls, and then were told it wouldn't happen before Election Day. The confusion raised questions about whether the status of newly enfranchised felons could be challenged in a tight statewide election. As we pointed out, because Trump won decisively, those fears were moot.

WHAT WE'RE WATCHING

***COVID*** cases climb: Voters may have embraced the claims of the president and Gov. Ron DeSantis that the country is "rounding the corner" on the pandemic, but the corner keeps getting harder to turn.

Sunday was the eighth day Florida reported more than 4,000 additional coronavirus cases with state health officials announcing 6,820 new confirmed ***COVID***-19 cases -- the most in almost three months.

Denying death data: Meanwhile, since the Department of Health took over analysis of ***COVID*** death certificates from the state medical examiners in August, it has since refused to release the reports to the public as the medical examiners had. Now, DeSantis appears to be at war with his own health department, not because they won't be transparent, but because he thinks they are over-counting ***COVID*** deaths.

The Miami Herald revealed this week that the DeSantis administration leaked about 800 copies of heavily-redacted death certificates to a Gainesville blogger who has been advancing what scientists consider a "conspiracy theory" that alleges some people died with ***COVID***-19 but not from ***COVID***-19. Public health experts say that's a meaningless distinction, and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention say that deaths are actually being under-counted nationwide.

In-person meetings resume: After DeSantis refused to renew his executive order allowing local government to meet virtually because of the pandemic, Miami-Dade's County commission chambers will open for the first time since March today. In-person meetings will resume, but the public will still be participating by video screen.

More GOP silence: The GOP-controlled Legislature which has not met in eight months has scheduled a one-day organizational session in the state Capitol next week to swear in new lawmakers. They and their staff must agree to be tested for coronavirus to enter the building and the public is still banned.

Although they have been absent for months, they won't be meeting to handle any government business until January. There are no scheduled public briefings on the handling of the pandemic, no questions about plans for ***vaccine*** distribution, no updates on testing and tracing and no public hearings on the troubled state unemployment system.

Storm closures: Late Sunday, Tropical Storm Eta was expected to barrel through the Keys and possibly become a hurricane. Most of the public activity in Miami-Dade, Broward and Palm Beach counties has stopped. Here's a list of what's open and closed.

Stay safe all and remember, the Miami Herald and McClatchy news sites have lifted the paywall on some of our coronavirus-related stories, but we very much need your help. To support vital reporting such as this, please consider a subscription for unlimited digital access.

Know someone who'd like to get this? Send this to a friend to receive our weekly newsletter on politics and policy.

**Load-Date:** November 9, 2020

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Miami-Dade has elected its first woman as county mayor: Daniella Levine Cava*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:616X-7J71-DYJM-M0NV-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

November 3, 2020 Tuesday

Copyright 2020 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** miami\_dade

**Length:** 2043 words

**Byline:**  Douglas Hanks and Joey Flechas

Miami Herald

**Body**

***Daniella Levine Cava*** was elected Miami-Dade mayor on Tuesday, the first woman to win the office and the victor in a campaign that upended the power of demographics in favor of partisan loyalty in a county where Democrats vastly outnumber Republicans.

She's the first candidate without Hispanic roots to win a county mayoral race since the early 1990s and the first Democrat since 2000. In two weeks, she replaces the current term-limited mayor, Carlos Gimenez, who has held the post for nine years.

The county commissioner from South Miami-Dade positioned herself as her party's choice in the officially non-partisan contest against fellow commissioner Esteban "Steve" Bovo Jr., a Cuban-American Republican who embraced President Donald Trump.

Her victory caps a six-year effort by Democrats to use their registration advantages in Miami-Dade to flip non-partisan county posts, a strategy that began when Levine Cava unseated a Republican commissioner in 2014.

Levine Cava led Bovo by a substantial margin after more than 1 million early votes and mail ballots submitted before Election Day were counted, a separation between the candidates that held steady through the night as precincts reported results.

Levine Cava declared victory in a speech to supporters before 9 p.m., after more than two-thirds of precincts had reported. Bovo conceded in a short speech shortly afterward.

"Tonight with humility and gratitude I am honored to stand before you as the first female mayor of Miami-Dade County," she said. "Miami-Dade's glass ceiling has been shattered."

Commissioner Esteban "Steve" Bovo lost the mayoral race to his fellow Commissioner Daniella Levine CavaCommissioner Esteban "Steve" Bovo lost the mayoral race to his fellow Commissioner ***Daniella Levine Cava*** who become the first woman elected as county mayor.

A Democrat for mayor counting on a big Biden win in Miami-Dade

A former lawyer and non-profit executive, Levine Cava, 65, campaigned with unprecedented financial and logistical backing of the Democratic Party and ran as a champion of progressive causes. She defied efforts by Bovo to cast her as a socialist at risk of turning Miami into "another Portland," and implemented a campaign strategy that rested on sharing a deluge of Democratic votes cast in a majority blue county.

"It means a revolution in Dade County politics," said Dario Moreno, the Miami pollster who worked for Gimenez's 2016 reelection campaign against fellow Republican Raquel Regalado. "A shift of eras."

Along with the first female chief administrator for Florida's largest local government, Levine Cava becomes Miami-Dade's first Jewish mayor. The grandmother of two represents Pinecrest, Palmetto Bay and other suburban and rural areas as the county's District 8 commissioner. With two years left on her final term, Levine Cava resigned her seat effective Nov. 16, the day before the new mayor is sworn into office.

Bovo joined his Election Night party about 30 minutes after Levine Cava spoke, and addressed a crowd gathered before a bandstand set up outside campaign headquarters in Westchester. Standing alongside two longtime Republican allies from Miami, U.S. Sen Marco Rubio and Lt. Gov. Jeanette Nuñéz, Bovo delivered his concession speech in Spanish and then English, saying he called Levine Cava with his congratulations.

14GeneralElectionBovo03 PPP.jpgCommissioner Esteban "Steve" Bovo Jr. with his family and friends addresses supporters as he loses the election against Commissioner ***Daniella Levine Cava*** in the Miami-Dade mayor race on election night on Tuesday, November 03, 2020

Bovo drew loud applause when he noted he had lost, but Trump would win Florida. And he told his supporters their efforts helped fuel a strong night for Republicans across Miami-Dade.

"While we're not victorious there are many who are going to receive the fruits of your hard work," he said. .His voice caught once, recalling the work his volunteers put in on Election Day even as the Democratic advantage in early and mail-in voting had left him even more the underdog. "Regardless of what was reported, you still were fighting," he said.

Levine Cava inherits a county government on an unprecedented crisis footing to combat the coronavirus pandemic, largely through a series of emergency orders issued by Gimenez that will now fall to the next mayor to extend, modify or quash. Those measures include a midnight ***curfew***, mandated ***mask*** wearing in most public areas, a suspension of transit fares, and a freezing of county police serving the papers needed to evict residential tenants.

Cava\_Elections\_MJO\_1.JPGMiami-Dade mayoral candidate ***Daniella Levine Cava*** hugs supporters as she awaits the results of her election at a watch party in Wynwood, Florida on Tuesday, November 3, 2020.

While Bovo opposed the ***curfew*** and urged Gimenez to keep restaurant dining rooms open during the summer ***COVID***-19 surge, Levine Cava criticized the two-term mayor for lifting restrictions too soon and not moving quickly enough to establish a contact-tracing program and promote isolation for people with the disease.

A native New Yorker like Bovo, she moved to Miami after earning a psychology degree from Yale and joint degrees in law and social work from Columbia University. Levine Cava spoke serviceable Spanish in debates against Bovo, a former Hialeah city council member who speaks fluent Spanish.

Her campaign strategy hinged on uniting Democrats around her in a county where 58% of the voters are Hispanic.

She campaigned on an agenda that emphasized action on climate change, a more active county government on the social-services front and a more active ***COVID*** response than the Gimenez administration's. With the mayoral contest overlapping with the high turnout of a presidential election, the landscape gave Levine Cava the partisan advantage. Democrats account for 41% of the county's voters, and Republicans just 27%.

Cava\_Elections\_MJO\_4.JPGDaniella Levine Cava celebrates during her watch party in Wynwood, Florida after winning the Miami-Dade mayoral race against Esteban Bovo on Tuesday, November 3, 2020.

Democrats helped run Levine Cava campaign efforts

The Democratic Party established a "coordinated campaign" with Levine Cava's, an effort that provided canvassers and office space across the county. "We're sharing field staff, we're sharing digital" said Darnell Roberts, deputy field director for the party-funded coordinated campaign. "It's never happened on the county level."

Levine Cava and Bovo landed on the fall runoff ballot for mayor after securing the top two slots in the non-partisan summer primary. Bovo won a narrow first place as the only elected Republican in the six-person contest. Levine Cava finished well ahead of the other two well-known contenders: former mayor Alex Penelas, a Democrat, and fellow commissioner Xavier Suarez, an independent.

Penelas sat out the fall campaign, and Suarez joined fellow candidates Monique Nicole Barley and Ludmilla Domond in backing Bovo.

An election between liberal and conservative commissioners

Stephen Clark was the last county mayor who wasn't also Cuban American, presiding over what was then still called Dade County. Clark lost the job in 1992 when a federal judge ordered a new system of county government allowing for more equitable representation of Black and Hispanic residents. Penelas became the county's first Cuban American mayor four years later, followed by two others: Carlos Alvarez and Gimenez.

The runoff set up a contest between commissioners who occupied the liberal and conservative wing of the 13-seat commission. Bovo won the backing of police unions, and voted against reviving the county's police oversight board in the wake of summer demonstrations tied to the death of George Floyd in Minneapolis.

Levine Cava backed the legislation, which passed. She was on the majority when Miami-Dade commissioners passed protections for transgender residents, and on the losing side on votes approving the American Dream Miami mega-mall and the 836 extension into West Kendall.

She also opposed the 2016 legislation Bovo sponsored that legalized Uber and Lyft, a law the taxicab industry argued gave ride-hailing companies unfair advantages. It was a loss to the taxicab industry that Salmon Cennod hasn't forgotten. The 66-year-old taxi driver was offering free rides Sunday to early-voting sites for people contacted by the Unite Here union, part of the labor coalition supporting Levine Cava.

"Daniella is the one who stuck with us the whole time," Cennod said after helping two people into the back of vehicle outside the North Miami library.

Cava\_Elections\_MJO\_6.JPGDaniella Levine Cava celebrates during her watch party in Wynwood, Florida after winning the Miami-Dade mayoral race against Esteban Bovo on Tuesday, November 3, 2020.

Levine Cava assumes office at a time of historic churn in county government. While mayors have been held to a pair of consecutive terms since the modern post was created in 1996, voters created the same eight-year cap for commissioners in 2012.

Forced exits arrived this year for five incumbents, including Bovo, who has held the District 13 seat since winning a special election for it in 2011. Add in Levine Cava's soon-to-be vacant seat, and the board will have at least six new commissioners along with a new mayor.

Levine Cava won her seat by unseating one of the board's most conservative members at the time, Lynda Bell.

Though she was known as Daniella Levine professionally, she used her married name for the campaign and moved into District 8 to qualify for the race. The county's Democratic Party helped organize for Levine Cava and gave her money, direct partisan support that was remarkable at the time for a county race. It was a prelude to her 2020 victory, since Bell was a Republican representing a district with a plurality of Democratic voters.

The commission was Levine Cava's first elected office, but she was a familiar face in County Hall for her work on behalf of the non-profit she formed in 1995 to advocate for low-income residents, Catalyst Miami. Before that, she worked in state government as a child-advocacy lawyer, including running the county's foster-child program after Hurricane Andrew.

She moved to Miami in the 1980s to join her future husband, Robert, then a young doctor working in his father's practice. They have two adult children.

Levine Cava's top donor was Hillary Clinton's top donor

A member of a wealthy New York family, one of Levine Cava's top donors was her mother, Lois. More than $1 million came from Hillary Clinton's top donor in 2016, Fort Lauderdale hedge fund mogul Donald Sussman. Former New York mayor Michael Bloomberg gave $500,000 to Miami-Dade's Democratic Party for turnout efforts, a record donation that boosted Levine Cava's get-out-the-vote resources as well.

"I've been doing this since 2004," said Christian Ulvert, the Levine Cava campaign manager who also ran both of her commission races. "The level of coordination launched by the Democratic Party has never been seen. By tomorrow, we'll probably have done 250,00 door knocks."

With party dollars and staff so invested in a non-partisan race, the Levine Cava campaign drew protests from Bovo that she was bringing Washington division into a contest that should be about local issues." Joe Biden won't get your garbage picked up," Bovo said at one campaign stop.

Annette Taddeo, a Democratic Florida state senator who campaigned with Levine Cava, argued a county candidate aligning with a political party lets voters make more informed choices.

"I think voters want to know what our values are," she said. "The values of the Democratic Party are the values of a lot of voters."

She spoke at a morning event at Levine Cava's polling place near the mayoral candidate's Palmetto Bay home. Women dressed in suffragette white stood behind her, a rally organized by Ruth's List, a fundraising organization that backs Democratic women running for office. Speaking at a lectern with a Biden/Harris placard under her own, Levine Cava noted the cooler temperatures that greeted voters on Election Day.

"I brought you the winds of change today," she said. "Isn't it a glorious day?"

El Nuevo Herald staff write Ana Claudia Chacin contributed to this report.

**Load-Date:** November 9, 2020

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Election 2020 live updates: Here's what is happening in Florida with 2 days to go*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:616B-YD01-DYJM-M00M-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

November 1, 2020 Sunday

Copyright 2020 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** state\_politics

**Length:** 570 words

**Byline:**  David J. Neal

Miami Herald

**Body**

We're keeping track of the latest news regarding the campaigns, early voting and other political news in South Florida and around the state. Check back for updates throughout the day.

The President and ***curfew***

President Donald Trump's Sunday night rally at Opa-locka Airport could wind up flouting the midnight ***COVID***-19 ***curfew*** of Miami-Dade County and Mayor Carlos Gimenez, a Trump supporter. But Gimenez issued a statement Sunday afternoon saying the rally will start at 9:30 p.m. and end before midnight. Democrats still criticized the rally as an insensitive, potential super-spreader event.

A new story on this situation posted Sunday afternoon.

Jill Biden and George Floyd's family in Tallahassee

While much of the national Florida focus was on South Florida, Jill Biden, wife of Democratic Presidential candidate and former Vice President Joe Biden, was in Tallahassee with the family of George Floyd. Floyd's death under a Minneapolis police officer's knee sparked, especially in the Black community, a surge of emotion and desire for social justice that Biden hopes he can convert to voting booth support.

Read the entire story here.

One last home-stretch push

In addition to "Souls to the Polls" drives across South Florida to get out the vote, President Donald Trump will hold an 11:30 p.m. rally at Opa-locka airport as hotly contested elections for U.S. president (Trump vs. Joe Biden), Miami-Dade mayor (***Daniella Levine Cava*** vs. Esteban Bovo) and a couple of U.S. House of Representatives seats (incumbent Democrat Donna Shalala vs. Republican Maria Elvira Salazar for Florida's 27th Congressional District, incumbent Democrat Debbie Mucarsel-Powell vs. Republican Carlos Gimenez for Florida's 26th Congressional District) reach the last two days.

For more, on this story, read here.

Smiley Tweet on Mail-in voting

The importance of Miami-Dade to Trump's re-election hopes

Trump won Florida despite being routed in Miami-Dade in 2016. But he's hoping a smaller margin of defeat in 2020 makes up for possible losses of support elsewhere in the state, thus allowing him to win Florida again, which would be a major push toward re-election.

For a more detailed look at Trump and Miami-Dade, read the full story here.

Kamala Harris in South Florida as Dems plead for Black voters

Her presence making clear how pivotal support from South Florida's Black community is to Joe Biden's hopes of winning Florida, Democratic Vice Presidential nominee Kamala Harris appeared at a drive-in rally at FIU's main campus and made stops in Broward and Palm Beach counties.

To read what Harris said as she tried to whip up a late wave of support, read the full story here.

The president's path to another 'upset' victory

The polls say Trump is heading for an Election Day defeat. But the polls said the same thing in 2016, and his campaign sees how Tuesday could end with another result that runs counter to the polls.

To see the layout of that path, read here.

Who the Trump campaign considered 'deadbeats' in 2016

Categorizing and targeting voters with specific advertising helped Donald Trump pull off an Electoral College win for the Presidency in 2016. But who were the voters the Trump campaign didn't consider worth its time or effort to win over or dissuade from voting?

The full story, a joint effort with the United Kingdom's Channel 4 news, can be found here.

This is the last weekend to vote early in Florida. Here's what you need to know

**Load-Date:** November 2, 2020

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Souls to Polls, boat parade and car caravan mark last day of early voting in Miami*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:616B-YD01-DYJM-M00N-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

November 1, 2020 Sunday

Copyright 2020 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** election

**Length:** 2405 words

**Byline:**  David Goodhue, Douglas Hanks, Monique O. Madan and Joey Flechas

Miami Herald

**Body**

On the Day of the Dead, the lively sights and sounds of the 2020 election were hard to escape in several corners of Miami-Dade County on the last day of early voting.

Marchers shimmying to brass and noisemakers marched in Liberty City, flanked by mostly supporters for former Vice President Joe Biden and his running mate Sen. Kamala Harris, in one of several Souls to the Polls events that sought to draw out Black voters and people of color. Car horns and salsa music bellowed through Westchester in a large caravan that drew hundreds of President Donald Trump's most loyal backers to the suburban rally.

While a few dozen boats waving Trump flags paraded south in Biscayne Bay, in clear view of the Miami's urban waterfront, Florida Memorial University's Marching Band bounced and swayed as it put on a show for people outside an early voting center in Miami Gardens. As the sun set and polls neared closing, a small group of progressive activists in downtown Miami held up photographs of people who have died in the ***COVID***-19 pandemic. It was a somber recognition of the Mexican holiday framed as a political call to action: Honor the dead by not voting for Trump.

A full docket of events for Sunday, from Souls to the Polls to a scheduled late-night appearance by Trump at the Opa-locka airport, highlighted Florida's role as a major battleground in the election. A crucial 29 electoral votes are at stake, and those campaigning for Trump and Biden were looking for one last push before Election Day on Tuesday. Churches, unions, grassroots groups and campaigns all labored to get out the vote.

A cornerstone to a Florida triumph: Miami-Dade County, dense with voters and an array of Republican and Democratic coalitions whose votes could prove decisive in a state where the margin of victory could be slim.

Total early voting ballots cast won't be available until Monday morning, but Miami-Dade already hit a milestone in pre-election day voting. On Oct. 31, Miami-Dade surpassed its early voting total from 2016, with nearly 478,000 ballots cast before Sunday's votes were counted -- about 2,000 more than the whole early voting period four years ago, according to county elections officials.

Democrats stump, Republicans caravan

Several Democratic candidates started their days at a gathering of about 100 people early Sunday at the South Dade Government Center in a rally organized by the American Federation of Teachers (AFT). U.S. Representatives Donna Shalala and Debbie Mucarsel-Powell, both running for re-election, were joined by Miami-Dade mayoral candidate ***Daniella Levine Cava*** at the campaign stop.

The politicos were joined by former Miami Heat player Shane Battier, who quoted late civil rights icon Rep. John Lewis on the important of voting.

"The late John Lewis said, 'Democracy is not a state, it's an act.' And, to act, you have to get out of your houses. You have to come to the voting polls," Battier told the crowd. "You have to hand in your mail-in ballot. Don't let it sit in a pile somewhere. You have to punch the buttons on the polls right here. Because we control this. The people."

goodhue\_nov1\_tweet\_southdade

One voter in attendance said Miami-Dade County is a reflection of the rest of the country. Eric Basterrechea, 43, said residents are concerned about issues like healthcare, housing, climate change, crime and corruption. But, because Trump isn't doing enough to address these problems, according to Basterrechea, nothing is getting done on the local and regional level.

"It's not a surprise that this place is everyone's focus, including the Republicans, because this is the place where it's going to make a big difference. It hasn't changed, and it's going to stay the same unless we do something about it," Basterrechea said. "It's like every other American city. Every city on a hill. You have crime and corruption and incompetence. And, why? Because the guy up top. It always starts with the top."

Pamela Green, 52, from Naranja, said there are many reasons why she's voting for Biden, but the Trump administration's handling of the ***COVID***-19 pandemic is the most recent.

"To me, this election is so important because honesty is on the ballot. Healthcare is on the ballot. I have kids in public school," she told the Miami Herald. "It's so important to me personally because we need leadership. Leadership has lacked during this pandemic."

MIA\_04TRUMPFLOTILLA\_CPJPro Trump boaters gather just north of the Venetian Causeway while waiting for the draw bridge to be upright and continue south toward the Bayfront Park shoreline in a show of support two days prior of the presidential election on Sunday, November 1, 2020 in Miami, Florida.

Hours later, a few dozen boats flying Trump flags launched from the Pelican Harbor Marina on the 79th Street Causeway around 11 a.m. and made their way south in Biscayne Bay toward Miami's downtown waterfront. Bicyclists and joggers on the Venetian Causeway stopped to take pictures with their phones.

In Westchester, a long stream of cars waving U.S. and Trump flags and honking horns left from Tropical Park and filled Southwest 40th Street. Hundreds of vehicles jammed lanes along the main street for more than an hour.

Some displayed flags from Latin American and Caribbean countries such as Cuba, Nicaragua and Venezuela, a signal of support from people in communities that Republicans have courted since Trump's election in 2016. The Republicans are counting on votes from Miami's western suburbs to elevate their candidates.

Roberto Rodriguez, 38, left the Westchester library early-voting site wearing a Smith & Wesson baseball cap. He cited gun rights as a top issue and one of the reasons he voted Trump.

"I support the NRA," said Rodriguez, a project manager from the Kendall area. "Biden would ban the AR-15."

Biden supports resuming the nationwide restriction on selling military-style rifles, known as the assault-weapons ban.

As Rodriguez voted, the Trump caravan roared by. With him was Aylin Vidal, a 36-year-old registered nurse. She also voted for Trump.

Her top issue? "In the days we're having now," she said, "it's safety."

trump\_caravan\_nov1\_westchester\_tweet

Souls to the Polls

Democratic organizer Tangela Sears spent early Sunday afternoon readying a Biden caravan to Miami Gardens in an effort to boost lagging turnout among Black voters. With church attendance down due to ***COVID*** and some places of worship closed, the Democrats are pursuing workarounds to the traditional Souls to the Polls Sunday early-vote push.

"We've got so many people that don't go to church. We're not reaching them," Sears said outside the Agenoria S. Paschal Elementary School in Miami's Brownsville neighborhood, near the start of the parade. "We want to remind people there is still time to vote. So we can get our numbers up."

Wearing a "Be Woke, Vote" cap, Sears said enthusiasm for the Democratic ticket could be stronger, but thinks that was an issue in Miami-Dade in 2016, too, when Hillary Clinton won the county by about 300,000 votes, outpacing Barack Obama's two elections in the county.

"People have been let down for so many years. When you've been let down so many times, you don't always see a good opportunity," she said. "We haven't had enthusiasm, in my opinion, since Bill Clinton and Obama."

In Liberty City, more than 100 people marched on Northwest 22nd Avenue in another event organized by the AFT.

"We're going to march like King did," said a man on the bullhorn, referring to Dr. Martin Luther King. "We're going to march like our forefathers did."

MIA\_003SOULSTOTHEPOLLSDSBahamian Junkanoo perform as people marching during the Souls to the Polls in the last day of early voting as part of one of many events prior to the general elections outside the Joseph Caleb Center on Sunday, November 1, 2020, in Miami. March begins at 1:00 pm from the African Heritage Cultural Arts Center 6161 NW 22nd Ave., Miami, FL 33142 Voters will March to the Joseph Caleb Center 5400 N.W. 22nd Ave., Miami, FL 33142 for a Rally and to VOTE!

Members of the Miami Bahamas Junkanoo Revue joined the march with colorful costumes, horns and drums providing a cadence. The Rev. Carl Johnson of the 93rd Street Baptist Church led marchers in chants of, "Let us vote, we shall vote."

The crowd arrived at the early voting site in the Joseph Caleb Center, where Jonita Roundtree, 58, of Liberty City, brought along her three young grandchildren, ages 3, 5 and 13, because she feels this is a historic election.

"I registered to vote when I was 18 years old, and I've never missed an election, and I definitely wasn't going to miss this one," Roundtree, a Biden supporter, said. "We can't afford not to vote. It's so important to me, and that's why I brought my grandchildren, so they can experience this."

Commissioner of Agriculture Nikki Fried, Florida Democrats' lone statewide elected official, came out to stump for Biden and Harris, because she said Trump's term "has been the worst four years of American history.

"Everything is on the ballot this year, from our decency, education, our democracy, healthcare, to women's rights, to social equality, the environment," Fried said. "Everything is on the ballot."

MIA\_006SOULSTOTHEPOLLSDSBahamian Junkanoo perform as people marching during the Souls to the Polls in the last day of early voting as part of one of many events prior to the general elections outside the Joseph Caleb Center on Sunday, November 1, 2020, in Miami. March begins at 1:00 pm from the African Heritage Cultural Arts Center 6161 NW 22nd Ave., Miami, FL 33142 Voters will March to the Joseph Caleb Center 5400 N.W. 22nd Ave., Miami, FL 33142 for a Rally and to VOTE!

In the last hour or two of voting, about a dozen people from grassroots groups and immigrant activists gathered in downtown Miami to commemorate the Day of the Dead by honoring those lost in the pandemic. A shrine with pictures of the dead included pan de muerto and traditional Ecuadorian drink called colada morada, a thick, purple beverage meant to symbolize the blood that's been spilled over the centuries.

In a rebuke of the Trump's handling of the coronavirus, the group advocated for votes against the president -- though not necessarily votes for Biden.

"We are not with the Biden campaign, but we are calling on voters to not vote for Donald Trump," said Andrea Mercado, 41, executive director of the New Florida Majority. "The failures of the leadership of the Trump campaign speak for themselves. Just look at the ways that his policies have affected Latino communities in particular -- from Latinos locked up at the border to Latino families who have lost a loved one during this pandemic."

As a mariachi band played "La cucaracha," activists marched to the Stephen P. Clark Government Center while voters trickled in to cast last-minute ballots. An exchange between voters captured the sometimes tense atmosphere of this election.

"Yes, Trump is a cockroach," one voter yelled as he danced inside. Another voter, 61-year-old Maria Hernandez, a Republican, fired back: "The only cockroach here is you."

Around the same time, about 50 people moved briskly in a line outside the North Miami library, a location that has had problems in past elections -- the voting room is named after Desiline Victor, the 102-year-old woman who waited three hours there to vote for Barack Obama in 2012. In the 2018 gubernatorial election, North Miami made national news when the Elections Department ran out of some precinct ballots during heavy turnout from the last "Souls to the Polls" Sunday when Andrew Gillum was running to be Florida's first Black governor.

But as Sunday's balloting came to a close, people advanced every minute in a line that snaked into a building now operating under social-distancing rules.

"I haven't been waiting long at all," said Chiva Charles, with about 15 people behind her at the time.

The 27-year-old college student and receptionist said she didn't want to chance more complications by waiting until Tuesday.

"I feel like on Election Day it's going to be worse," she said.

Make your vote count

As of Sunday morning, the statewide advantage Democrats have had in ballots cast slimmed to about 94,000 votes, a gap that has been closing for days as Republican turnout increased during early voting.

Thirty-three early voting centers across Miami-Dade and 24 in Broward were open until 7 p.m. Sunday. Voters could cast ballots in person or drop off completed mail-in ballots at secure drop boxes at early voting sites. Mail ballots need to be received at the county elections office by 7 p.m. Tuesday.

MIA\_101LASTDAYEARLYVOTINGDSA woman walks outside the Coral Gables Library to cast her vote during the last day of early voting for the general elections on Sunday, November 1, 2020.

If you have a mail ballot but decide you would rather vote in person, you can hand over your mail ballot to a poll worker Sunday and fill out a ballot in the voting booth.

Early voting ended Sunday. On Monday and Tuesday until 7 p.m., Miami-Dade voters can drop off mail ballots -- make sure they are properly sealed and signed -- at four locations:

The Miami-Dade Elections Department, 2700 NW 87th Ave., Doral

North Dade Regional Library, 2455 NW 183rd St., Miami Gardens

Stephen P. Clark Center, 111 NW 1st St., Downtown Miami

South Dade Regional Library, 10750 SW 211th St., Cutler Bay

Broward voters have only two locations to drop off mail ballots on Monday and Tuesday (until 7 p.m.):

Rear entrance of Lauderhill Mall Voting Equipment Center, 1501 N.W. 40th Ave., Lauderhill.

The Brickell Avenue entrance to the Supervisor of Elections office at 115 S. Andrews Avenue, Fort Lauderdale.

The last chance to vote in person is on Tuesday, Election Day, where voters must go to their assigned precincts between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m.

Trump scheduled late rally in Opa-locka

Trump was expected to land at Miami-Opa-locka Executive Airport around 11 p.m. Sunday to rally supporters at an event that could violate the county's midnight ***curfew***, a ***COVID***-19-related measure that is currently tangled in a court battle.

The Republican National Committee advised Miami-Dade Mayor Carlos Gimenez, a Republican candidate for Congress endorsed by Trump, that the event is expected to end before midnight.

Meanwhile, Democrats blasted Trump for holding a rally that could attract thousands during the pandemic.

Miami Herald staff writer David Smiley contributed to this report.

**Load-Date:** November 2, 2020

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Trump's late-night rally plans are giving Miami-Dade its biggest curfew headache yet*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6165-G3T1-JC3J-X207-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

October 31, 2020 Saturday

Copyright 2020 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** miami\_dade

**Length:** 1170 words

**Byline:**  Douglas Hanks and David Smiley

Miami Herald

**Body**

Will President Donald Trump break ***curfew*** in Miami-Dade this weekend?

The President's Friday announcement of an 11:30 p.m. appearance Sunday at a campaign rally at county airport in Opa-locka has the administration of Mayor Carlos Gimenez scrambling to deal with its latest headache tied to the mayor's embattled midnight ***curfew***.

If Trump doesn't move up his arrival, the event promises the most high-profile ***curfew*** break yet at a time when county lawyers are trying to convince a state appeals court that the restriction is a vital public health measure against the spread of ***COVID***-19. Saturday night, the White House released an updated schedule showing Trump arriving 30 minutes earlier, with 11 p.m. appearance in Opa-locka and departing at 12:20 a.m.

Imposed in July to discourage late-night socializing and drinking in large groups, the ***curfew*** was briefly suspended two weeks ago. The pause came after the Tootsies strip club in Miami Gardens convinced a Circuit Court judge that Gimenez's order violated a decree by Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis. The statewide order said anti-***COVID*** measures couldn't force businesses to close or restaurants (Tootsies serves food) to reduce capacity below 50%.

The Third District Court of Appeal temporarily suspended that ruling as it decides which was to rule on the county's appeal, so the Trump rally arrives at a delicate time for the county's legal department.

Gimenez, a Republican candidate in a congressional district that leans Democratic, could be faced with changing the rules to bring the Trump rally into compliance or letting the president and his supporters flaunt a county rules the day before Election Day.

He's already under pressure to keep the rules in place. ***Daniella Levine Cava***, the Democratic county commissioner running to succeed Gimenez as mayor, issued a statement Saturday saying Trump "should not get special treatment" from the county.

"The President's announcement shows complete disdain for the effort put forth by our community to keep each other safe," Levine Cava said. "President Trump should not get special treatment and he must respect and follow the same rules as Miami-Dade County residents."

On Thursday, event organizer Dawson wrote Daniel Agostino, assistant director for operations at the county's Aviation Department, to request a "First Amendment permit" for a 10 p.m. rally, with an expected attendance of between 6,000 and 10,000 people. There's no mention of an end time, and the permit was granted the next day, with use of the site until 2 a.m. Monday.

On Friday, Gimenez's communications director, Myriam Marquez, said the 11:30 p.m. Trump appearance, revealed by the campaign that day, was news to the county. She wrote in an email "we don't know where this time change comes from. Checking with our legislative office. The County Attorney's Office is researching ***curfew*** issue." There was no update Saturday morning.

Greg Chin, a spokesman for the county agency, which includes Miami International Airport, said the 2 a.m. end time was granted to allow "essential workers" to break down the rally site. The permit, granted in a letter from Agostino, doesn't include any direct mention of a midnight ***curfew***. It did attach the Gimenez order requiring masks be worn in most places outdoors.

Trump has violated the county's ***mask*** order in appearances at Miami-Dade this year, though he wouldn't have to wear one at Sunday's rally. Ahead of Democratic nominee Joe Biden's Oct. 5 appearance at an NBC town hall at the Perez Art Museum in Miami, Gimenez loosened the ***mask*** rule to exempt people speaking at an event if certain barriers or markers are present to keep people least 10 feet away.

Gimenez, a candidate for the 26th congressional seat held by Democratic freshman Rep. Debbie Mucarsel-Powell, could announce rule changes ahead of the Trump rally.

One option would be announcing a later ***curfew***, an option the mayor floated earlier in the week before the Trump news. He told county commissioners Monday the ***curfew*** "could move back an hour or two" as an accommodation to restaurants and bars complaining about lost late-night business.

Another option would be adding an exemption to the ***curfew*** order allowing political events to last longer. In September, Gimenez exempted pro sports to allow Hard Rock Stadium to reopen for University of Miami and Miami Dolphins games.

If the rally hits the high end of its planned attendance range, it would be one of the largest public events in Miami-Dade since Gimenez first declared a coronavirus emergency March 9.

Jason Jenkins, a Dolphins spokesman, said Saturday that the maximum attendance for the three home Dolphins games played in September and October occurred on Oct. 4, with 12,369 spectators for the match-up against the Seattle Seahawks.

The Dolphins imposed a series of ***COVID*** restrictions for events at the 65,000 capacity stadium, including spaced-out seating, ***mask*** requirements and staged entrances to reduce close contact in public spaces.

Trump's outdoor rallies have raised alarms by public health authorities in other cities for encouraging supporters to gather in large groups. Trump has been a leading skeptic of ***mask*** use as a ***COVID*** measure, and was diagnosed with the disease himself after a Sept. 26 reception for future Supreme Court justice Amy Coney Barrett where attendees mingled outside the White House without masks.

Sunday's rally has given Democratic leaders an opportunity to preemptively link Gimenez to Trump's Miami-Dade rally.

On Thursday, during a St. Thomas University virtual panel called "Leadership in the Land of ***COVID***," Gimenez said he remained concerned about expectations of a "second wave" of the novel coronavirus, and did not believe it a smart move to lift the midnight ***curfew***.

"There's been talk about lifting the ***curfew*** and right now I don't think that's the right move," Gimenez said. "I'm not going to do it until we're assured we've cleared this hurdle and try to keep this contagion as low as possible."

Gimenez then questioned why Miami was allowing nightclubs to stay open past midnight while a county ***curfew*** remains in effect, referencing the E11EVEN nightclub's plan for a 12-hour Halloween party starting at 8 p.m.

"I see now, I'm looking at my Twitter, and there's a big Halloween thing going on in the city of Miami and they're going to go on from 8 to 8. I hope that the city of Miami enforces the ***curfew***. If not, then I guess we're going to have to do it. Because we know these events are super spreader events," he said.

Oscar Braynon, a Florida Senator who represents Opa-locka and sat on the St. Thomas panel, said it's hypocritical and insensitive of Gimenez to accommodate a large gathering in the city.

"Opa-locka's parks aren't open. They're not having any [public events] for Halloween because they're an elderly population that's afraid of ***COVID***," said Braynon. "They haven't done anything but food giveaways and they're going to have a 10,000-person event in the middle of their city? And the county is forcing it upon them?"

**Load-Date:** November 1, 2020

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Election 2020 live updates: Here's what is happening in Florida with 3 days to go*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6164-TK71-JC3J-X19F-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

October 31, 2020 Saturday

Copyright 2020 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** state\_politics

**Length:** 1551 words

**Byline:**  Howard Cohen

Miami Herald

**Body**

We're keeping track of the latest news regarding the campaigns, early voting and other political news in South Florida and around the state. Check back for updates throughout the day.

Shifting alliances and new coalitions: Why Trump's path to victory runs through Miami

Trump supporters hold rally in Miami LakesTrump supporters hold rally in Miami Lakes on Sunday, June 14, 2020.

4 p.m.: Heading into the final days of the election, with polls and turnout trends portending another close Florida race, President Donald Trump's hopes of winning another four years in the White House could very well depend on his ability to squeeze every last drop of red out of Miami-Dade County.

Trump, a Republican who rose to power four years ago on a hardline immigration platform, will touch down late Sunday to speak in the deep blue region of his must-win home state, where more than half the population was born in another country.

Read the story here.

Bovo holds rally in Coral Gables, appeal to Trump supporters

3:25 p.m.: Miami-Dade mayoral candidate Esteban "Steve" Bovo, a Republican running against Democrat ***Daniella Levine Cava***, appealed to Donald Trump supporters at a GOP rally in Coral Gables Saturday.

Sen. Marco Rubio and Florida's Lt. Gov. Jeanette Nunez attended, too.

Bovo rally

Thousands board 'Trump Train Manatee' to support president

Trump Train rallyThousands rally for President Trump at Trump Train event in Bradenton.

3:15 p.m.: It's likely been decades since so many parking spaces were occupied at Desoto Square mall in Bradenton as thousands rallied on Saturday in support of President Donald Trump.

Early estimates were that about 5,000 people were gathered at the mall, but packed cars with waving Trump and American flags were still steadily rolling in well before the scheduled departure time at noon.

Read the story here.

Trump's late-night rally plans are giving Miami-Dade its biggest ***curfew*** headache yet

BRD\_4trumpttPresident Trump holds a rally in a parking lot at Raymond James Stadium in Tampa October 29. His plans for a Nov. 1 late-night rally in Opa-locka sets up a violation of Miami-Dade's midnight ***curfew*** if there isn't a change in the rules or his schedule.

2:55 p.m.: President Donald Trump's announcement of an 11:30 p.m. appearance Sunday at a campaign rally at a county airport in Opa-locka has the administration of Mayor Carlos Gimenez scrambling to deal with its latest headache tied to the mayor's embattled midnight ***curfew***.

If Trump doesn't move up his arrival, the event promises the most high-profile ***curfew*** break yet at a time when county lawyers are trying to convince a state appeals court that the restriction is a vital public health measure against the spread of ***COVID***-19.

Gimenez is already under pressure to keep the rules in place. ***Daniella Levine Cava***, the Democratic county commissioner running against Republican Steve Bovo to succeed Gimenez as mayor, issued a statement Saturday saying Trump "should not get special treatment" from the county.

Hanks cava tweet

Read the story here.

Kamala Harris rallies Miami Dems in final early voting weekend

Harris mia gardens

MIA\_100Kamala31NEWPPPElizabeth Deveaux was among supporters of VP Joe Biden, who gathered in their cars during a drive-in car rally held by U.S. Senator Kamala Harris, running mate of Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden held at FIU South Campus in Miami as she campaigns ahead of November 3rd Election Day in South Florida on Saturday, October 31, 2020

Daugherty harris tweet

12:30 p.m.: Hundreds of cars, decked out in Biden-Harris signs and flags, gathered at Florida International University's South Campus in west Miami-Dade to hear vice presidential candidate Sen. Kamala Harris speak on Saturday.

Harris visited South Florida in a final swing through the state, where latest polling shows a razor-thin margin between her running mate, former Vice President Joe Biden and President Donald Trump.

Harris opened her speech in Miami by highlighting the "four crises" that she says are brought about by Trump.

Read the story here.

gross chef tweet

Dozens of undelivered ballots found at Miami-Dade post office with mail backlog

MIA\_MIAMIDADEMAIL-INBALLOTS (5)Miami, Florida, October1, 2020- Workers load carts filled with ballots onto a waiting USPS truck at the Miami-Dade Elections Dept. in Doral, Florida. The Miami-Dade County Elections Department mailed more than 530,000 vote-by-mail ballots Thursday, October 1, to voters with a request on file for the November 3, 2020 General Election.

12:25 p.m.: Special agents with the U.S. Postal Service Office of Inspector General discovered 48 pieces of election mail sitting in a post office in South Miami-Dade County on Friday, the office announced Saturday morning. Forty-two of them were ballots that had not yet been delivered to voters, officials said, while the other six had already been filled out and were brought to the Miami-Dade supervisor of elections Friday night.

The agents "combed through every bit" of mail sitting at the Princeton post office near Homestead on Friday after reports of a backlog of mail piling up at the facility just four days before the Nov. 3 election.

Read the story here.

Every state attorney in Florida should do what Miami-Dade's Fernandez Rundle did | Editorial

This is the last weekend to vote early in Florida. Here's what you need to know

IMG\_2046.jpegThe voter's mail-in ballot drop-off box at Kendall Branch Library at 9101 SW 97th Ave. in Miami, seen here on Oct. 22, 2022, has a drive-thru lane where a poll worker will check to make sure you signed the outside of your envelope and drop it into the box for you. Or you can walk up and drop it into the drop-off box during early voting hours of 7 a.m.-7 p.m. through Nov. 1 in Miami-Dade and Broward.

Noon: This is your last weekend to early vote in South Florida before Election Day on Tuesday.

If you still want to take advantage of the last remaining moments before Election Day -- when you have to vote at your assigned precinct -- here is a last minute refresher on how to do that.

Read the tips here.

Obama will visit South Florida on Monday, Biden campaign announces

Barack Obama campaigns for Joe Biden in MiamiBarack Obama accused Donald Trump of ignoring pandemic planning and caring about his image over the health of Americans while campaigning for Joe Biden in Miami. Obama held drive-in rally in North Miami to drum up support for Biden and Harris.

11:20 a.m.: Kamala Harris is in Miami on Saturday. Donald Trump will be in Opa-locka Sunday. And now former President Barack Obama will swing through South Florida the day before Election Day.

Miami-Dade County is getting tons of attention in the election's final 48 hours.

The Joe Biden campaign announced Saturday that Obama will travel to South Florida as part of a two-state swing on Monday. Details to come.

Read the story here.

early vote nos smiley

Democrats lean on Souls to the Polls in final push for turnout

MIA\_02SOULSTOTHEPOLLS\_CPJCampaign volunteers hold up signs and hand-out campaign literature as motorists arrive at the North Dade Library to vote early during the local primaries. On Sunday, August 16, Faith in Florida and Florida Rights Restoration Coalition came together and hosted Souls to the Polls Parade in Miami-Dade County and caravan to the North Dade Library in Miami Gardens, Florida .

11 a.m.: With turnout lagging, much of the Democratic hopes for turning Florida blue could hinge on the success of this weekend's efforts to turn out voters at Black churches. This year, behind the musical acts, prize giveaways and celebrity guest appearances typical of Souls to the Polls, activists are feeling the pressure.

Days before the election in Miami-Dade County, Democrats are slipping behind in turnout. To date, Miami-Dade Republicans have turned out 64% of their voters. Democrats have turned out 57%, a seven-point gap.

"Whatever effort we felt we lost last weekend, we are pushing for it this weekend " said Rhonda Thomas, an Opa-locka pastor and executive director of statewide group Faith in Florida, which organizes many Souls to the Polls events. "This Souls to the Polls is so important to Black and brown families. We have so much to lose if we don't get out to vote."

Read the story here.

Unprecedented numbers of Florida women donating to presidential candidates

AFP\_8TJ6MP.jpgPresidential candidate Joe Biden and President Donald Trump talk to voters and argue with each other during their first debate in Cleveland. Both are campaigning in battleground Florida.

10:30 a.m.: From foreign policy to law and order, healthcare to the economy, abortion access to minority rights -- their reasons are varied and differences in opinions many, but across party lines Florida has seen a surge in the number of women contributing to candidates this election cycle.

Read the story here.

Soggy start for the last early voting weekend

7:30 a.m.: Voters heading to the polls for the last Saturday of early voting were greeted by passing storms, as in this scene at an early voting site at the Davie-Cooper City library.

IMG\_0634.jpgA soggy scene at 7:30 am Saturday, Oct. 31, 2020, at the early voting site at the Davie-Cooper City library.

So what's the rest of the day going to be like weather-wise?

Will trick or treating get rained out in South Florida? It depends on where you live.

**Load-Date:** October 31, 2020

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Election live updates: Here's what's happening in Florida with four days to go*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:615X-VJ41-DYJM-M0KB-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

October 30, 2020 Friday

Copyright 2020 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** state\_politics

**Length:** 1653 words

**Byline:**  Howard Cohen and Devoun Cetoute

Miami Herald

**Body**

We're keeping track of the latest news regarding the campaigns, early voting and other political news in South Florida and around the state. Check back for updates throughout the day.

MIA\_MIAMIDADEMAIL-INBALLOTS(2)Voting is underway in Florida. Absentee ballots went out last week in Miami-Dade. Here, workers load carts filled with ballots onto a waiting USPS truck at the Miami-Dade County Elections Department in Doral.

A backlog of mail is piling up at a Miami-Dade post office as Election Day nears

9 p.m.: Mail is piling up at a post office in South Miami-Dade County with Election Day coming up.

At the Princeton post office near Homestead a backup of mail that should have been delivered is piling up, according to Mark Travers, South Florida president for the National Association of Letter Carriers.

On Friday, State Rep. Kionne McGhee tweeted a brief, undated video clip purporting to show mail stacked up at the Princeton post office with the caption, "Raw footage of mailroom in post office here in Miami Dade. Source revealed 'mail in ballots are within these piled up in bins on the floor. Mail has been sitting for over week!' "

A campaign spokesman for Miami-Dade mayoral candidate ***Daniella Levine Cava*** called the footage from McGhee's tweet "incredibly disturbing" and called on county elections officials to respond.

U.S. Postal Service spokeswoman Debbie Fetterly said the USPS was looking into the matter.

"We are aware of the footage and immediately reported this to our contact at the U.S. Postal Service," said Miami-Dade deputy elections supervisor Suzy Trutie. "They are looking into the matter and have assured us that all ballots will be delivered timely."

Read the full story here.

1278509221 (1).JPGTyler Herro #14 of the Miami Heat reacts during the second half against the Los Angeles Lakers in Game 3 of the 2020 NBA Finals at AdventHealth Arena at ESPN Wide World Of Sports Complex on Oct. 4, 2020 in Lake Buena Vista.

Miami Heat has a plan to help those waiting in Election Day lines: 2020 playoff replays

8 p.m.: In effort to kill boredom while waiting in Election Day lines, the Miami Heat has come up with a solution.

The Heat announced a plan Friday to stream one-hour game broadcasts from its run to the NBA Finals throughout Election Day on both the team's website (Heat.com) and the Heat app. The streams are only available for those in South Florida.

There will be 15 games streamed between 6 a.m. and 8 p.m. on Tuesday.

Read the full story here.

Trump's rally permitted -- but Miami-Dade plans to enforce some rules

4:40 p.m.: President Donald Trump wants to attend a rally Sunday night at 11:30 p.m. at Opa-locka Executive Airport. But Miami-Dade has a midnight ***curfew***.

A letter from Miami-Dade's Aviation Dept. to the Republican National Committee granting the OK for Trump's rally at the Opa-locka airport lists an end time of 2 a.m. but includes a reminder of the county's current ***COVID mask*** mandates and states that everyone at the event will be governed by it.

A Republican organizer told Miami-Dade the Trump rally is scheduled to start at 10 p.m. Sunday, and county says 2 a.m. end time for permit is for "essential" workers for clean up. The county still has a midnight ***curfew***.

hanks dade2am

miamidade letter re trump rally hanks

Hialeah was a tie in '16 in presidential race. Six Miami-Dade cities to watch

IMG\_Election\_2020\_Trump\_\_33\_1\_CLJ9SLBI\_L603458048.JPGThe battle for Miami-Dade comes down to the size of Demoratic nominee Joe Biden's winning margin, which President Donald Trump needs to keep low enough that he can wipe it out elsewhere in Florida. It's a fight that plays out across Miami-Dade's 34 cities and in the suburbs.

4:20 p.m.: The Florida race between Joe Biden and President Donald Trump is expected to be close. If Trump improves on his 2016 numbers in Miami-Dade, it could help him win the state.

Much of the battle in 2020 will unfold in cities across Miami-Dade, the state's most populous county. There are six places to watch: Hialeah, Palmetto Bay, Doral, Miami Lakes, Miami Gardens and North Miami.

Read the report here.

Florida entrepreneurs and business owners on virtual forum support Biden, slam Trump

3:05 p.m.: Prominent Florida business leaders sought to rally support for Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden on Friday with a virtual town hall appealing to undecided Hispanic and Black voters.

The event, organized by the Biden for President campaign, included appearances by healthcare industry magnate Miguel "Mike" Fernandez; Related Group CEO and chairman Jorge M. Pérez; renowned Spanish chef José Andrés; VMD Ventures founder Harold Mills; and Half Moon Empanadas CEO Pilar Guzman-Zavala.

The hour-long discussion, moderated by Felice Gorordo, CEO of eMerge Americas, gave each panelist the opportunity to share personal stories and argue against the "socialist" label that opponents have pasted on Biden.

Read the story here.

Trump plans a MAGA rally at airport in Miami-Dade County close to Election Day

AFP\_8U67CB.jpgUS President Donald Trump speaks at a "Make America Great Again" rally at Raymond James Stadium's parking lot on October 29, 2020, in Tampa, Florida. (Photo by Brendan Smialowski / AFP) (Photo by BRENDAN SMIALOWSKI/AFP via Getty Images)

1:50 p.m.: Donald Trump's campaign on Friday announced that the president will attend an 11:30 p.m. rally on Sunday, Nov. 1, at Opa-locka Executive Airport, part of a frenetic, 48-hour, cross-country tour. The rally is expected to be Trump's final South Florida appearance before Election Day.

Trump's appearance will likely violate a midnight ***curfew*** in Miami-Dade County put in place by Miami-Dade Mayor Carlos Gimenez, who is also running for Congress as a Republican with Trump's endorsement.

Read the story here.

Fraudster attempts to register dozens of dead Democrats in Broward

11:50 a.m.: Authorities have uncovered an attempt to register dozens of dead people as voters in Broward County, the Sun Sentinel reported.

Though officials said no mail-in ballots were requested or cast under the falsified voter IDs, the scheme exposes weaknesses in Florida's voter registration process.

Read the story here.

How is the vote shaping up so far in Florida?

10:30 a.m.: The race to get their ballots in early is getting closer among Democrats and Republicans, the numbers show.

Smiley tweet vote

Where Trump and Biden are campaigning on Friday

AFP\_8TJ6MP.jpgPresidential candidate Joe Biden and President Donald Trump talk to voters and argue with each other during their first debate in Cleveland. Both are campaigning in battleground Florida.

10:15 a.m.: Florida motorists get a break Friday -- at least in terms of traffic tie-ups owing to visits by contenders in the presidential race.

After hitting South Florida and Tampa on Thursday, President Donald Trump and his opponent, former vice president Joe Biden, are campaigning in other states Friday, The Hill reports.

Biden in Wisconsin, Iowa and Minnesota.

Trump in Michigan, Wisconsin and Minnesota.

Biden's VP running mate Kamala Harris, however, will visit Miami-Dade, Broward and Palm Beach counties on Saturday.

Kamala Harris to visit Miami, Broward and Palm Beach on final weekend of early voting

Lil Wayne posted a photo of his meeting with President Trump and Twitter is going nuts

8:15 a.m.: Lil Wayne started a fire on social media on Thursday night when he posted a picture with President Donald Trump during his visit to Florida.

President Trump was making campaign stops in the state on Thursday. The tweet had a mixed response among the rapper's fans.

Dwayne Michael Carter Jr., better known as Lil Wayne, spoke to Trump about criminal justice reform, but Carter had his own run-in with the law late last year.

In December, Carter was facing a weapons and drug investigation after his private plane was stopped at Miami-Opa-locka Executive Airport.

Read the story here.

Fake threats trigger fear for Spanish-speaking Trump backers

MIA\_006Anticomunsim10NEWPPP.JPGGisela Fiterre attended an Anti-Communist Caravan for Freedom and Democracy and in support of President Trump, beginning in the Magic City Casinos parking lot at 450 NW 37 Avenue following a route through several Miami streets including SW 8 Street and Flagler Street, on Saturday, October 10, 2020.

8:10 a.m.: In private messaging apps and social media, Spanish-speaking residents in South Florida have been exposed to a barrage of deceptive claims -- a voter disinformation tactic that could last until Election Day.

The latest example is an anonymous message that emerged in WhatsApp chats this week that threatens Spanish-speaking supporters of President Donald Trump. The claims have rattled some Hispanics in South Florida even as experts warn of the claims' falsehoods.

Read the story here.

A populist strongman? Democrats struggle with labeling Trump a 'caudillo' in Spanish ads

Priorities USA Super PAC launched authoritarianism ads targeting Florida LatinosThe Democratic Super PAC Priorities USA launched a series of first-person ads featuring Latin American immigrants comparing President Donald Trump to authoritarian leaders in their home countries. The campaign launched on Presidents' Day in February. The video is one of the ads from Priorities USA promoting the initiative.

8:10 a.m.: In the one-minute, Spanish-language campaign ad, a Kissimmee woman named Cecilia reminisces about Venezuela, her homeland. As she drives a black car with Biden-Harris painted in white on her back window, she speaks of her grandmother, her childhood home and her friends.

The ad attempts to counter claims -- many from President Trump and his campaign -- that Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden is a socialist, while also comparing Trump to Nicolás Maduro, a caudillo, a traditional Latin American authoritarian strongman.

But some Democratic strategists cannot come to a consensus on whether Trump should be called a caudillo, or a Latin American strongman.

Read the story here.

**Load-Date:** October 31, 2020

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Miami Beach commissioner contracts COVID-19, and two county candidates pause events*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6150-B5X1-DYJM-M22N-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

October 25, 2020 Sunday

Copyright 2020 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** miami\_dade

**Length:** 645 words

**Byline:**  Martin Vassolo and Douglas Hanks

Miami Herald

**Body**

Miami Beach Commissioner David Richardson said Sunday that he has tested positive for ***COVID***-19.

The announcement prompted Miami-Dade County Commissioners ***Daniella Levine Cava*** and Eileen Higgins -- who appeared with Richardson at a campaign event Friday in South Beach -- to stop campaigning for the day and get tested at the Hard Rock Stadium site in Miami Gardens.

Levine Cava is running for county mayor and Higgins is running for reelection to the commission. Both received initial negative tests Sunday at the Hard Rock Stadium testing site, and will stay isolated until the more reliable "PCR" tests come back Tuesday, their campaigns said.

Miami Beach Mayor Dan Gelber, who attended Friday's event, said he will get tested Monday. Christian Ulvert, campaign consultant to Levine Cava and Higgins, also attended the event and said he has since tested negative for the coronavirus.

IMG-2996.jpgMiami Beach Commissioner David Richardson, middle, has tested positive for ***COVID***-19. His announcement prompted Miami-Dade Commissioners ***Daniella Levine Cava***, right, and Eileen Higgins to get tested for the coronavirus. Levine Cava, a mayoral candidate, and Higgins, who is up for reelection to the commission, attended a South Beach campaign event Friday with Richardson.

"I have already reached out to the few people who were around me in the past few days without a ***mask*** to encourage them to get tested as soon as possible, and I will continue to work with professionals on contact tracing," Richardson said in a statement Sunday.

Everyone who attended Friday's event at the Ocean Drive drag bar Palace wore masks. Richardson said he began feeling "mild" symptoms on Saturday evening, hours after hosting a food distribution event outside the South Shore Community Center in Miami Beach.

richardson statement

Saturday's no-contact, drive-through event was part of the weekly food distributions Richardson has organized throughout the pandemic. All volunteers were wearing masks and gloves, he said, adding that he had no contact with attendees or their food.

"There was no contact with the participants in their cars as the windows were up," he said. "Also, since I am busy managing the events I don't touch the food that is placed in cars."

Miami flash briefing player embed

After testing positive Sunday morning, Richardson said he began his quarantine and feels only minor symptoms.

The news from the former Democratic lawmaker scrambled campaign plans for Levine Cava, the party-backed candidate for Miami-Dade mayor.

Ulvert said she dropped plans to appear at early voting sites Sunday afternoon. Instead, she was heading for the ***COVID*** testing site at the stadium. Levine Cava and Higgins had planned to go to the Miami Beach Convention Center to get tested, but then discovered it was closed. "They've been in line for the last 30 minutes" at Hard Rock, Ulvert said. Before 6 p.m., Ulvert said the results were back and both candidates tested negative.

He said Higgins, running for reeelection as the county's District 5 commissioner, and Levine Cava, currently the District 8 commissioner, aren't experiencing symptoms. He issued statements for both candidates say they would "not have any in-person campaign stops tomorrow" as they await results from PCR diagnostic tests. That type of test is considered more reliable than the rapid tests that can quickly flag someone with ***COVID*** but aren't as good at concluding someone doesn't have the virus.

In his statement, Richardson said he has "been very diligent about wearing my ***mask***, and there are very few instances where I have been without a ***mask***."

He said he is working with the city of Miami Beach and the Florida Department of Health in contact-tracing efforts.

"My primary concern at this point is to notify anyone who may have been in contact with me so they can take the proper precautions for their own health," he said.

**Load-Date:** October 25, 2020

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Trump votes early in West Palm Beach as both campaigns rally in Florida*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:614N-19R1-JC3J-X08N-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

October 24, 2020 Saturday

Copyright 2020 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** election

**Length:** 1026 words

**Byline:**  Bianca Padró Ocasio, David Smiley and Joey Flechas

Miami Herald

**Body**

President Donald Trump has voted twice by mail since becoming a Palm Beach County resident one year ago. But on Saturday, like so many other Florida Republicans, Donald Trump voted for Donald Trump in person.

Trump cast his ballot at the Palm Beach County main library in West Palm Beach at around 10 a.m.. Trump voted alone in a private room at the library, according to White House Press Secretary Kayleigh McEnany. Outside, Trump supporters waved flags and chanted, hoping to catch glimpse of the president.

He emerged from his private voting room around 10:17 a.m. With library stacks behind him, he quickly stopped to tell reporters he felt more secure voting in person, as opposed to mailing in his ballot. He also shared his predictable pick for the presidency.

"I voted for a guy named Trump," he said, before leaving in a motorcade for the airport.

The president's campaign organized events outside early voting locations in Miami-Dade, Naples, Jacksonville, Pensacola and Tampa. Large screens streamed the moments after Trump's vote.

bianca trump vote tweet

Early voters cheer in Miami-Dade

Outside the Westchester Regional Library in West Miami-Dade County, about 50 people gathered on the lawn of Francisco Human Rights Park, where a big screen showed Trump moments after he cast his ballot and as he addressed reporters, eliciting cheers from the Westchester crowd.

Many of them waited to cast an early ballot Saturday morning, just hours before the president cast his own. They cheered the president and other Republican candidates down the ballot.

"We're here especially for Maria Elvira Salazar, Esteban Bovo and Donald Trump, who is the priority. We're here for the main thing, which is him, honestly," said Gloria Molina, a 58-year-old Nicaraguan voter who cast her early ballot Saturday. Salazar is a Republican running for Congress in Miami. Bovo is a Republican running for Miami-Dade mayor.

Molina and her husband, Eduardo Jorge, both said they wanted to see their vote being counted in person, as opposed to sending a mail ballot, because they didn't trust vote-by-mail, a process the president has repeatedly sought to brand as untrustworthy.

"I know there's a lot of tricky stuff with the vote-by-mail, that's why I don't trust it," said Jorge, 56, who is Cuban American.

Also at the event in Westchester: Florida Lt. Gov. Jeannette Nuñez, co-chair of Latinos for Trump, who voted in person.

bianca dem westchester tweet

On the other side of the library -- and political spectrum -- local Democratic candidates and a crowd of about 50 supporters gathered near a colorful Colombian chiva bus, as a few women danced cumbia, a Latin American folk dance, and wore full white pollera skirts decorated in red, yellow and blue. A musician was banging on a caja vallenata, a drum made with cow-skin.

U.S. Rep. Debbie Mucarsel-Powell, Miami-Dade commissioner and mayoral candidate ***Daniella Levine Cava*** also made appearances, using the opportunity to blast Mayor Carlos' Gimenez's decision to veto the idea of turning the American Airlines Arena into a voter precinct. Gimenez is Mucarsel-Powell's challenger for the District 26 congressional seat.

Many of the Democratic supporters said they had already voted -- by mail. Lisandra Miller, 48, said her whole family had voted by mail.

"I work for the post office so I know it is [trustworthy]," she said. "We don't sell votes ... We put everything in the mail stream and everything goes straight to the Department of Elections, so we don't throw anything away. That's just rhetoric."

Miller, who wore a Mucarsel-Powell face ***mask***, added that she voted Democratic all the way down the ballot because she felt it was important to keep Democrats in power at the congressional level.

"[Trump] hasn't changed anything," Miller said. "He's just made everything worse."

More than 12,000 people had already voted at the Westchester library, which serves a largely Cuban-American community in West Miami-Dade County. It has been one of the busiest voting centers in South Florida and an indicator of Trump's support among Cuban-Americans and Republicans' zeal to vote in person at the polls before Election Day.

Republicans and Democrats voting differently in Florida

Trump is banking on big Republican turnout at early voting centers before Nov. 3 to help minimize Florida Democrats' mail voting edge.

Around 575,000 more Democrats than Republicans have voted by mail since late September in Florida. But Republicans have outnumbered Democrats at early voting locations by around 190,000 during five days of early voting.

The numbers are a reversal of nearly two decades early and mail voting trends in Florida, in which Republicans have built advantages through the mail and Democrats popularized early voting centers. The coronavirus pandemic fueled the transition, as the response to ***COVID***-19 pushed Democrats to view mail ballots as a safer option -- and Trump to attack the security of mail voting, at times repeating falsities about discarded mail ballots.

trump vote tampa tweet

Trump's inaccurate characterizations of mail voting, though, don't appear to have diminished the party's mail voting numbers. Florida Republicans were likely to set a party record Saturday for number of mail ballots cast in an election at more than 1.1 million, topping their 2016 numbers with 10 days still to go before Election Day.

Republicans didn't keep pace with Democrats as the pandemic fueled record vote-by-mail ballots cast.

Instead, Republicans are showing up big during early voting. And Trump wants them to show up to avoid needing a massive Election Day push to win his home state -- a battleground he can't afford to lose.

Democrats, who tend to vote in greater numbers on weekends, are also looking for a big South Florida Saturday. Former President Barack Obama planned a drive-in rally Saturday in North Miami, and Biden's campaign organized a series of events around the state.

Trump cast his ballot the morning after campaigning in The Villages retirement community in Central Florida and in Pensacola. After voting, he was scheduled to campaign Saturday in North Carolina, another crucial battleground for the president.

**Load-Date:** October 24, 2020

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Trump has struggled with seniors. Can he make up the difference with Hispanic voters?*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6140-FF11-DYJM-M3KB-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

October 21, 2020 Wednesday

Copyright 2020 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** election

**Length:** 1542 words

**Byline:**  Francesca Chambers and David Smiley

Miami Herald

**Body**

The most recent visits to Florida by President Donald Trump and Vice President Mike Pence illustrate the reliance of the Republican ticket on two voting blocs seemingly headed in opposite political directions this election: seniors and Latinos.

Pence on Thursday stumped in Miami-Dade County with Hispanic voters who, compared to four years ago, have shown a greater willingness to bubble in Trump's name on the ballot. The following day, Trump promised seniors in Fort Myers that a ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** would be available first to seniors, who appear to be pulling back from the president amid the pandemic.

In must-win Florida, where tight margins can make even small shifts in voter sentiment consequential, the shifting balance between those two demographics could prove decisive as Trump faces off with Democratic nominee Joe Biden.

"I don't know if there's a more important two blocs in the state of Florida," said Chuck Rocha, the Democratic political consultant behind the Latino outreach Nuestro PAC.

Four years after Trump won Florida by about 113,000 votes, polling suggests he's lost support among senior voters and improved his standing among Latinos. Both the Trump and Biden campaigns continue to spend millions on TV and countless hours on the ground in the state attempting to bolster their standing and hurt their opponent with those two groups.

During the Fort Myers trip, Trump told a room of seniors that they "will be the first in line for the ***vaccine***. And we will soon be ending this pandemic."

"I'm moving heaven and earth to safeguard our seniors," Trump said, "deliver life-saving therapies in record time, and to distribute a safe and effective ***vaccine*** before the end of the year."

Trump, who according to exit polling won seniors by 17 percentage points in 2016 in Florida, appears this year to be struggling to win voters 65 and older by the same margin. He led Biden by 10 points in that group in a University of North Florida poll released Tuesday. Some national polls have found Biden ahead of Trump among older voters by a wide margin.

Any slippage with Florida's seniors could doom Trump. Voters 65 and older comprised 35.5% of the electorate in 2016, according to the AARP.

"Even a small shift among this voter bloc has to be offset by a pretty significant increase across another voting bloc," said Jeff Johnson, the Florida state director for the AARP. "If one of three votes is cast by someone 65 and over, it's going to take a lot to make up for a one point or two point shift."

The Trump campaign insists the president is doing better with seniors as Election Day grows closer. Pollster Brock McCleary said Monday during a call for Trump campaign staff that the president's internal polling numbers are "on the rise" with older voters in Florida after recent efforts to reach out to seniors.

McCleary said he found a 19% increase in support among seniors for Trump in the Tampa media market "that has put our numbers on terrific footing." On a different call on Oct. 12, with reporters, Trump campaign manager Bill Stepien acknowledged that seniors were a weak point but said a new commercial attacking the 77-year-old Biden as a threat to safety net programs in Florida and other swing states would be effective.

"It's been tested. It tests off the charts. Messaging that seniors want to see, and is being delivered to them," he told a reporter. "Whatever perceived slippage you're seeing in your numbers among seniors, I'm absolutely certain that it will be addressed."

But if Trump can't pull his numbers with seniors back to 2016 levels, he may have a cushion with Florida Latinos, who have shown less resistance to the president than they did four years ago.

Where a CNN exit poll found him losing the Latino vote by 38 points in 2016, some recent statewide surveys have found Trump behind Biden by half of that or less. Stepien, on the call with reporters, said he expects any loss of support by Trump since 2016 "to be offset by gains in certain voting populations -- Black, Hispanic and others -- based on the president's appeal, policies and the outreach he's been conducting for the last four years."

Rocha, the Democratic consultant behind Nuestro PAC, said Trump's spending on Spanish-language TV in Arizona and Florida and the lack of hard-line immigration rhetoric in his paid messaging reflects his need to win over a sector he used as a foil in 2016.

"He knows he doesn't need to win all the Latino votes. He just needs to win a bigger percentage than he did last time to make up for the old, white votes he's losing," Rocha said. "That's why you had one Cuban after another at the [Republican National Convention]. That's why you literally had him naturalizing citizens at the RNC."

Just as Trump must pull up his support among seniors, analysts believe Biden must improve his numbers with Hispanic voters -- especially if Trump's support among white voters remains strong.

Simulations of the Florida election run in September by Equis Research found that if Biden holds the same 41% support among white voters that top-of-ticket Democrats earned in 2018, Biden would need to pull 59% support among all Hispanic voters to win the state. And to hit those numbers, Biden needs to perform better with the 40% of Hispanic voters in Florida who are neither Cuban nor Puerto Rican.

Stephanie Valencia, president of Equis Research, said the firm's polling found Biden stagnant in the high 50s with non-Cuban and non-Puerto Rican Hispanics from the end of August through early October.

"He needs to be closer to 70 with that group," she said. "They're deeply anti-Trump. But they're not yet pro-Biden. If there's a place where the Biden campaign and Democrats should be running up the score, it's with those voters."

Part of Biden's struggle appears to be with Cuban Americans, but Equis' polling also found the former vice president slipping with Puerto Rican men. Trump began targeting them with radio and TV ads in recent weeks, particularly in the Tampa and Orlando areas.

Cuban Americans account for 29% of Hispanic voters in Florida and Puerto Ricans account for 27%, according to a Pew Research Center analysis.

"What they're trying to do is create enough doubt about Joe Biden and enough concern about him, his leadership and capabilities," Valencia said. "They've created a both-sides-ism that actually just makes Latino voters just stay home. A Latino male staying home is a net vote for Donald Trump."

But the candidates' numbers among Hispanic and senior voters are not static, and the election is underway in Florida. More than 3 million people have voted so far by mail or at early voting centers, and the campaigns continue to churn out new ads in English and Spanish and appear in person in key media markets in Central and South Florida.

In left-leaning Miami-Dade County, where as recently as Labor Day a Bendixen & Amandi International poll for the Miami Herald found Trump had improved his standing over 2016 by about 100,000 votes, a new Change Research poll commissioned by the mayoral campaign of ***Daniella Levine Cava*** found that a flurry of campaign spending by Biden had lifted his numbers to Hillary Clinton's 2016 levels. That year, Clinton crushed Trump by 300,000 votes in Miami-Dade, Florida's most populous county.

"We see seniors showing growing support for Vice President Biden because he has a plan to confront ***COVID*** and protect Social Security and Medicare. We are equally seeing great momentum and support among Hispanic voters across the state because they know Joe Biden is ready to fight for our community and stand up for democracy in Latin America," said Christian Ulvert, a senior adviser to the Biden campaign in Florida.

But the Trump campaign says it, too, is seeing positive signs in its numbers with seniors and Latinos.

"Support for President Trump is growing because he has delivered for America's seniors by preserving Social Security, strengthening Medicare, and lowering prescription drug prices across the board," said Ali Pardo, a Trump campaign spokeswoman. "This president has also prioritized success for the Hispanic communities by creating jobs, lowering taxes and, most recently, by delivering the White House Hispanic Prosperity Initiative."

Johnson, the AARP state director, said the group's polling has shown that Medicare, Social Security and high drug prices remain top priorities for seniors, as they have been for years. A new, fourth priority, has been added, he said: the coronavirus pandemic.

Back in Fort Myers on Friday, Trump, who has often dismissed the severity of the pandemic and encouraged his supporters to push Democratic governors to open up their states, brought up the pandemic again, but with a different tone.

"There are people also that would rather stay in place, stay where you are. And to those people -- and I understand that very well: Stay. Just relax. Stay until it's gone. And it'll be gone, but stay. Don't feel badly or don't feel good about it. Just stay. If you feel safe, stay," said the president who has chafed at universal lockdowns and ***mask*** orders.

Trump, 74, told the group, "I'm working as hard as I can so you can kiss and hug your children and grandchildren very soon. That's something I missed also, I will be honest with you."

**Load-Date:** October 21, 2020

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Early voters break 2 million, ballot rejection woes, and Florida puts felons in a voting trap*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:613H-VT01-JC3J-X53C-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

October 19, 2020 Monday

Copyright 2020 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** politics\_policy\_in\_sunshine\_state

**Length:** 1855 words

**Byline:**  Mary Ellen Klas

Newsletters |

**Body**

It's Monday, Oct. 19 and today is the first day of in-person early voting in Florida.

If enthusiasm is as high as it has been in other states, we may be headed to a record turnout election, despite the pandemic.

Consider: As of Sunday, with just over two weeks left, more than 2 million votes had already been cast through mail-in ballots, compared to 2.7 million cast by Election Day 2016. Democrats have the early edge as more than 1.2 million Democrats had voted by mail in Florida, compared to 754,000 Republicans. Of the 2 million votes already cast, Democratic party officials say 350,000 of them are Democrats who didn't vote in the last election.

The pressure is on Trump supporters to reverse that advantage. Republicans suggest that Democrats may have tapped out their base. Based on their data, they say, there are 471,000 more high-propensity Republican voters left to vote in Florida than there are Democrats.

So how safe is it is to vote in person? We asked infectious disease doctors who told us that voting at the polling place is a relatively safe activity, comparable to grocery shopping -- if everyone wears a ***mask***.

WHAT WE'RE WATCHING

Wafer-thin margins: The Democrat's vote-by-mail advantage is also belied by the polls, where Biden holds a wafer-thin lead. According to Real Clear Politics, the average of the Florida-only polls have Biden up by 1.4 percentage points.That's not only narrow, it is also within the margin of error.

Here are the results of the most recent Florida-only polls released in the last week: The Hill/HarrisX (Oct. 12-15) tie; Trafalgar Group (Oct. 11-13) Trump +2; St. Pete Polls (Oct. 11-12) Biden +2; Emerson (Oct. 10-12) Biden +3; Reuters/Ipsos (Oct. 7-14) Biden +2; Mason-Dixon (Oct. 8-10) Biden +3; Florida Atlantic University (Oct. 9-10) Biden +4; FOX 35/InsiderAdvantage (Oct. 6-7) Trump +3; CNBC/Change Research (Oct. 2 - 4) Biden +4.

What does all this signal? Recount prospects.

Mail-in rejections: If Florida has another uncomfortably close election, the unprecedented spike in mail-in ballots could spell trouble this year. Florida's decentralized voting system means that the way ballots are rejected for a mismatched signature or other error is not uniform across the state. Research from the University of Florida shows that amid those inconsistencies, young and minority voters in Florida are most likely to have their ballots rejected.

And as of last week, the number of invalid ballots flagged for rejection (more than 11,000) had already exceeded the number of votes that decided the 2018 U.S. Senate race. It's all shaping up to make some worry that uncounted vote-by-mail ballots could be the hanging chads of the 2020 presidential election.

Ballot fix: What should you do if you make a mistake on your ballot? You have until 5 p.m. on Nov. 5 to cure your errors. Here's a primer.

Crisscrossing candidates: With voters now flocking to the polls, expect the revolving door of presidential candidates into the state to continue. Last week we saw Democrat Joe Biden come to Democrat-heavy Broward for a drive-in rally in the heavily Caribbean-American city of Miramar.

President Donald Trump was here three different days. First in Sanford on Monday, then in Miami, where he appeared at the town hall at the Perez Art Museum Miami.

The president continued to draw pandemic-era crowds bigger than some college football teams. On Friday, he entered the Ocala International Airport hangar to the tune of The Village People's 1978 hit "Macho Man."

Also last week, Vice President Mike Pence traveled to the Memorial Cubano in Tamiami Park to deliver more of the anti-socialism-themed message. And on Sunday, there were dueling car caravans for Trump supporters and the former vice president's "Ridin' with Biden" events.

WHAT WE'RE TALKING ABOUT

Trump's Cuban edge: According to polls, Trump has been more competitive in South Florida than four years ago, due largely to his consolidation of conservative-leaning Cuban Americans, especially those younger and newly registered. That has strengthened Trump's standing in Miami-Dade County, where polls show the president still trails Biden but has narrowed the gap significantly.

NPA wildcards: Republicans have nearly closed the gap in registration this cycle with Democrats, but voters who don't register with a party will be crucial -- not only for the race for president but many down-ballot contests. One key example is House District 118, a true swing district that has rocked like a pendulum nearly every two years for the past several cycles. Rep. Anthony Rodriguez, a Republican, faces challenger Ricky Junquera, a Democrat, but the voter registration numbers show 3,000 more Republicans voters than Democrats. What makes this district still swing? One third of the district --34,000 voters --have registered as no party affiliation and they remain the wildcard.

Distancing on health care: One sure sign that Republicans think the president is in trouble in Florida will be how they approach controversial issues he's embraced, such as the border wall or the repeal of Obamacare.

Two examples are Republican U.S. House candidates Carlos Gimenez and Maria Elvira Salazar. Despite years of GOP efforts to repeal the landmark health care law, they both say they don't want to dismantle the law that has enabled 200,000 residents of Miami-Dade County and the Florida Keys to enroll in health insurance.

Trailing in fundraising: By the way, both Gimenez, the Miami-Dade County mayor who is challenging Democratic Rep Debbie Mucarsel-Powell, and Salazar, who is trailing Democratic Rep. Donna Shalala, have less cash on hand than their opponents.

AFP\_8T24XWjpg.JPGDemocratic Presidential Candidate Joe Biden speaks during a drive in rally in Miramar, Florida on October 13, 2020. - Joe Biden headed for Florida to court elderly Americans who helped elect Donald Trump four years ago but appear to be swinging to the Democratic candidate for the White House this time around amid the coronavirus pandemic. Biden, at 77 the oldest Democratic nominee ever, is to "deliver his vision for older Americans" at an event in the city of Pembroke Pines, north of Miami, his campaign said. (Photo by JIM WATSON / AFP) (Photo by JIM WATSON/AFP via Getty Images)

Not all Cubans with Trump: Miami developer Jorge Pérez -- the namesake of the art museum where Trump appeared Thursday night for his televised town hall -- may have developed Trump-branded condo towers and considered the president a friend, but he has joined a bi-partisan group of Cuban-Americans now working to defeat Trump.

Felons in voting trap: Last week we learned how Florida has put felons who have served their time in a new Catch-22. State elections officials told county supervisors they will start the process of removing felons who owe court fees or fines from the state's voter roll -- but not before Election Day. That's because the prolonged legal challenge to a state law attempting to implement Amendment 4 delayed attempts to update the voting rolls and it is now too late to remove anyone from the state's election list.

But, according to an analysis by the Herald/Times and ProPublica, while the court case was playing out, at least 31,400 felons registered to vote. Thousands of them are likely ineligible now because they owe court debts the court said they must pay, but many of them may not be aware that they cannot vote. Here's the catch: If they vote, their votes not only could be declared ineligible and result in a legal challenge, the former felons could be charged with a crime.

900,000 disenfranchised: How many formerly incarcerated Floridians are ineligible to vote despite passage of the 2018 constitutional amendment? The Sentencing Project last week released a report that shows that 900,000 Floridians with felony convictions are unable to vote because of a law signed by Gov. Ron DeSantis last year that required them to pay all court fees, fines or restitution before voting.

Bi-partisan beat-down: Incoming House speaker Chris Sprowls, a Republican, and a former Senate Democratic leader Janet Cruz, a Democrat, are backing a last-minute attempt to derail the citizen initiative known as All Voters Vote.

The amendment asks voters to open state and legislative races to voters regardless of party affiliation, forcing candidates to appeal to a broader constituency beginning in 2024. The system would weaken party control, but the legislators suggest the real problem is Black candidates running in the state's current legislative districts could be disadvantaged if white candidates run against them in their primaries. Those districts, however, will be redrawn by the next election.

Source those mailers: We know that amid the political mailers and emails you receive is a near constant stream of false content and misleading information. That's why reporters at the Miami Herald have been going through some of the ads to figure out what's true, what's not, and who pays for it all.

Check out our Election Ad Decoder. Our latest installment looks at ads about Anthony Fauci, donation matches, mayoral candidate ***Daniella Levine Cava***, Broward races, as well as disinformation about the cruise referendum, riots and looting.

***COVID*** testing: The state has stopped paying for staff ***COVID*** tests at assisted living facilities and now many facilities are asking their insurance companies to pick up that tab. But it's not happening. So what does that mean for the governor's claim that the state has made protecting elders its top priority?

High school dilemma: Many Florida high school seniors are facing a pandemic-induced hurdle as they prepare to apply to college: They've not been able to take the required standardized tests. But despite school disruptions and limited tests, Florida education officials refuse to waive standardized testing requirement for 2021 applicants.

More transparency breaches: For several days over the last two weeks, the Department of Business and Professional Regulation experienced a widespread outage of its email and online web services. DBPR Secretary Halsey Beshears said malicious activity had been detected and led to online service outages. The agency disclosed the investigation on Friday, only after the Herald/Times asked the agency about the attack. Employees also have raised concerns about not being told and whether their information had been compromised.

Curtains for ***curfew***: Miami-Dade County's ***COVID curfew*** for the nightlife industry first was extended to midnight last week, and then was ended by a lawsuit. A court victory by the Tootsies strip club killed the measure last weekend. County lawyers have asked an appeals court to revive the measure but, meanwhile, the mayor said it wouldn't be enforced.

Stay safe all and remember, the Miami Herald and McClatchy news sites have lifted the paywall on some of our coronavirus-related stories, but we very much need your help. To support vital reporting such as this, please consider a subscription for unlimited digital access.

Know someone who'd like to get this? Send this to a friend to receive our weekly newsletter on politics and policy.

**Load-Date:** October 19, 2020

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Trump returns to the campaign trail, his base shifts, and 1.6 million Floridians have already voted*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6121-D1N1-JC3J-X0X9-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

October 11, 2020 Sunday

Copyright 2020 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** politics\_policy\_in\_sunshine\_state

**Length:** 1990 words

**Byline:**  Mary Ellen Klas

Newsletters |

**Body**

It's Monday, Oct. 12 and President Donald Trump will be in Florida today for his first in-person rally outside the White House since he resumed campaigning after his ***COVID***-19 diagnosis.

His arrival follows a weekend of car caravans in Miami, the amped-up variation on the political rally in the ***COVID***-era. On Saturday, thousands of people took to the streets for what was billed as an Anti-Socialist and Anti-Communist Caravan to demand the liberation of Cuba, Venezuela and Nicaragua and warn the United States about the dangers of socialism.

And on Sunday, organizers touted a 1,000-car caravan of Joe Biden supporters as they snaked through Miami Springs, Cutler Bay, Doral, West Kendall and downtown Miami.

Trump in Sanford: The president's Monday rally, originally scheduled for Oct. 2, will be held at the Orlando Sanford International Airport at 7 p.m. Neither the Trump campaign nor the White House had indicated late Sunday if any additional safety measures will be taken to prevent transmission of the ***COVID***-19 virus among those traveling on Air Force One or those attending the rally.

"I'm immune," the president declared in a Fox News interview Sunday, despite questions that remain about his health.

Canceled debate: The Commission on Presidential debates ended speculation about the Oct. 15 debate between the presidential contenders at the Adrienne Arsht Center for the Performing Arts in Miami and officially announced on Friday the event will be canceled "for the health and safety of all involved." The final presidential debate is scheduled for October 22 in Nashville.

Biden attacks on Cuba: Biden arrived in Miami last week for this first visit in more than a year, attacking the president's hard-line policies in the Americas, saying his opponent's tough talk and steep sanctions have only entrenched Cuba's Communist government.

Rubio touts Trump: By Sunday, Donald Trump Jr. and U.S. Sen. Marco Rubio were in Miami countering that argument with a "Fighters Against Socialism" rally that capped the end of a four-city bus tour for the president.

Voters Guide: For more information about the candidates on your ballot, be sure to check out the Miami Herald's Voter Guide. It gives users a customized sample ballot based on your address. The guide is a one-stop resource that includes candidate profiles, voting information and our Editorial Board candidate recommendations.

It also includes questionnaires that we sent to dozens of candidates running in key races for Miami-Dade voters, which are available to our subscribers.

WHAT WE'RE TALKING ABOUT

MIA\_Citizenship\_Ceremony\_MJ(2)People participate in a naturalization ceremony for becoming American citizens at the U.S. Citizenship & Immigration Services District Office in Miami, Florida on Friday, October 2, 2020.

How determined are people to vote this year? Consider this scene: More than 200 immigrants became newly minted United States citizens at the Miami office of the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) the Friday before the Oct. 5 deadline for getting registered to vote. Getting naturalized in time for the election had been far from guaranteed after many coronavirus-related disruptions at the USCIS delayed the citizenship ceremony.

Or this scene: After "unprecedented traffic" to the Florida Department of State voter registration website -- which included more than 1 million requests an hour -- the site crashed on the last day of voter registration. The state was forced to extend the deadline by a day.

Registration scolding: A federal judge rejected calls from voting rights groups to further extend the voter registration deadline. But Judge Mark Walker also used the moment to blast the state for being "unable to run a functional voter registration website" and for other failures in conducting elections.

Trump's shrinking base: Pollsters say they have learned lessons from 2016, when they failed to give proper weight to non-college-educated voters who overwhelmingly backed Trump. If we can trust the polls this cycle, they are producing some notable surprises. Most important for Florida is what appears to be the shrinking advantage Trump has over voters who aligned with him two years ago: voters over age 65 and Cuban-American voters.

Among seniors: Florida's senior voters, who traditionally vote at higher rates than any other age group, have shifted in significant numbers away from Trump to Biden, according to a series of recent polls. Trump won Florida by just over 113,000 votes in 2016 but won senior voters by nearly 330,000. Because of the electoral map, Trump's campaign considers Florida a must-win state for his reelection, so a significant drop in senior voting will require a requisite increase in another group.

Among Cuban-Americans: A similar shift is happening among Cuban-American voters, according to a poll by Bendixen & Amandi International and the Miami Herald released last week. While Cuban-American voters continue to favor Trump over Biden in Miami-Dade County, pollsters found that more are moving toward the Democratic nominee, boosting his chances of winning battleground Florida.

Election jitters: The union representing Florida healthcare workers filed a lawsuit against Postmaster General Louis DeJoy last week, asking the court to order him to reverse actions that it claims will delay the delivery of vote-by-mail ballots and disenfranchise Florida voters.

Virus jitters: The virus continues to upset the best of plans. On Sunday, the Miami Dolphins' Week 6 game against the Denver Broncos was rescheduled because of the New England Patriots' ***COVID***-19 outbreak.

Miami-Dade's public schools reopened last week, easing more than 140,000 students back into the schoolhouse. But crossing guards and ***mask***-covered smiles were not all that greeted students as they walked onto campus. The district also faced the first confirmed cases of ***COVID***-19 in the school system.

Shielding deaths: The State of Florida continued to show how transparency about the virus is an afterthought. A 23-year-old corrections officer died after being exposed on the job, but the state didn't report it on its official prison death report.

WHAT WE'RE WATCHING

1.6 million ballots cast: This is rubber meets the road time this election cycle. By Sunday, there were a stunning 1.6 million vote-by-mail votes casts in Florida -- 844,000 from Democrats, 485,000 from Republicans and 310,000 from voters with no party affiliation. In-person early voting begins in a week.

Pandemic is top issue: Voters tell pollsters that the top issues this election cycle are the pandemic and the economic fallout that followed.

Then there's the little problem of the state's malfunctioning unemployment web site. The State of Florida admits it has mistakenly paid out unemployment benefits to people who were not eligible, and it wants the money back, but it won't say if it knows how much it is owed or how it is going about collecting it. The U.S. Department of Labor estimates it's as much as $25 million.

But do candidates tell voters how they would use their position to address the top concerns? It's a mixed bag.

How many mailers have you received where there's no mention of the pandemic, or the unemployment system? How many suggest the only thing you're concerned about is asking teachers to carry guns in school, defunding the police, or a host of other misleading claims?

Decoding those ads: We know your mailbox, digital and otherwise, is likely overflowing with election attacks, smears and appeals to support or oppose a candidate or ballot measure. The Miami Herald has compiled a handy Election Decoder to help you learn more about who is behind these often-mysterious mailers and ads. You can search our growing database to research the emails and mailers you are receiving at home.

Mayor's race: Some candidates are talking seriously about how to handle the pandemic and its fallout. In the debate between Miami mayoral candidates Esteban "Steve" Bovo Jr. and rival ***Daniella Levine Cava***, we heard them describe their differing approach to how to get coronavirus under control in the county.

SD 39: In one of the most closely watched races on Florida's November 3 ballot, between Reps. Javier Fernandez and Ana Maria Rodriguez for the Senate District 39 seat that represents South Miami-Dade and all of Monroe County, the candidates have described to voters what steps they would take to help those hardest hit medically and financially by the pandemic.

Rodriguez promises to "fix the unemployment compensation system," allow "small businesses to operate free of bureaucratic red tape and burdensome regulations" and "use a data-driven approach to ensure the economy is reopened timely and responsibly." Fernández wants more affordable housing, and says that the state reopening needs to better "protect workers" and that serious budget work will have to be done to address issues ignored amid the pandemic.

SD 37: Sen. Jose Javier Rodriguez and Senate Democrats are defending against a challenge from Latinas for Trump founder Ileana Garcia. Rodriguez wants Gov. Ron DeSantis to be held more accountable for how he has handled the pandemic. Garcia, like most Republicans, is more interested in talking about fixing the flawed unemployment system.

HD 114: In House District 114, an open seat House Democrats are trying to hold, Democrat Jean-Pierre Bado is running against Republican Demi Busatta. Both candidates agree that fixes need to be made to the state's beleaguered unemployment system. But they take very different approaches to helping pandemic-battered small businesses. Busatta Cabrera wants cuts in regulations while Bado wants more loan programs for small businesses.

HD 110: But in many races the candidates aren't signaling pandemic solutions. For example, in the House District 110 to replace José Oliva the outgoing House speaker, Democrat Annette Collazo is running again Republican Alex Rizo. Both of them cite education issues as their top priority.

Elder care Qs: There are many other issues at stake this cycle. For example, do you know what your candidates plan to do to improve the testing regimen that has forced so many Florida nursing homes, assisted living facilities and elder communities to keep residents isolated, even while ***COVID***-19 cases continue in their homes? Only last week after elder advocates demanded action for months, DeSantis announced that these homes will soon be able to conduct 15-minute ***COVID***-19 tests on staff, patients and visitors. The federal government will pay for it.

Health insurance Qs: Do you know what candidates will do about health insurance? Or what they will do about the fact that Florida saw the second-largest increase of uninsured children in the nation in the last three years, according to a study by Georgetown University?

Environmental Qs: What do you know about what your state and local officials suggest should be done about the polluting septic tanks that have become "ticking bombs" in the era of sea level rise? For example, Miami-Dade County has had a rule on the books that would switch thousands of people to sewer, so why aren't they using it?

Tourism Qs: When you don't hear many answers, that's a sign that the answer is going to be difficult. Take, for example, the enormous job losses underway in one of Florida's marquee industries, tourism. Workers are questioning whether there will be a future and are struggling to make ends meet. Once elected, these candidates will be expected to find the solutions. Don't voters deserve to know what they're thinking now?

Stay safe all and remember, the Miami Herald and McClatchy news sites have lifted the paywall on some of our coronavirus-related stories, but we very much need your help. To support vital reporting such as this, please consider a subscription for unlimited digital access.

Know someone who'd like to get this? Send this to a friend to receive our weekly newsletter on politics and policy.

**Load-Date:** October 12, 2020

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*A torrential downpour didn't stop these volunteers from giving out food in the Grove*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:611P-3421-DYJM-M1JS-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

October 10, 2020 Saturday

Copyright 2020 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** coconut\_grove

**Length:** 1160 words

**Byline:**  Christina Mayo

Miami Herald

**Body**

The early Saturday September morning was rainy and windy, but student organizer Mary Logan Woolsey, 16, and all her volunteers managed to give away enough food and personal care items for 350 families in spite of the weather.

They arrived at 7 a.m. at Macedonia Missionary Baptist Church in Coconut Grove to set up the Farm Share food bank produce, chicken, milk, bread, cheese and canned goods for distribution. They also needed to unpack body wash, liquid hand soap and toilet paper donated by Joshua's Heart Foundation and the Woolsey family.

"One thing we could not have foreseen, was the fact that a tropical storm blew through in the middle of the distribution," Mary Logan said. "We found out only one day in advance, so we had very little time to prepare."

She said the downpours and large gusts of wind made it difficult to keep the tents "upright and functioning."

"The most surprising and amazing aspect of it all was how positive everyone remained, even while they were being totally soaked by the rain. All the volunteers kept working without questions or complaints, and just carried on as if nothing had changed."

Mary Logan, a junior at Ransom Everglades School in Coconut Grove, is a junior advisory board member with the student-run Joshua's Heart Foundation. The group to help others in need was founded by Ransom Everglades graduate Joshua Williams when he was 5 years old.

This was the second Farm Share Distribution led by Mary Logan. Her classmates showed up to volunteer at the drive-through event as well as some other, better-known, helpers. All wore masks and kept to social distancing protocols, difficult for an event of this kind.

"I was so impressed by the overall positivity and dedication from our volunteers," she said.

"It was so humbling to see everyone there, from State Representative Nicholas Duran, to commissioners ***Daniella Levine Cava*** and Ken Russell and his daughters, SEIU Local 1991 President Martha Baker along with nurses and doctors from Jackson Memorial Hospital, President of Related Urban Development Group Albert Milo Jr. and his children, to Ransom Everglades Upper School students, parents, Joshua's Heart volunteers, and members of the Macedonia Missionary Baptist Church all participating with such enthusiasm.

"I thought it would be difficult to create our normal sense of unity and togetherness at a distribution without being able to actually be together, but this group of people made my worries completely disappear."

Surgical masks were donated by Russell, Levine Cava, SEIU Local 1991-Jackson nurses, doctors, and healthcare professionals, and State Representative Nicholas Duran, who represents the area around Jackson Memorial.

Through "many setbacks, obstacles, and surprises," Mary Logan said, the event "ultimately proved to be a true testament of the power of unity."

Alina Villasante PLW BaptistAlina Villasante, founder and designer of Peace Love World, is an ambassador for Baptist Health's "Wear A ***Mask*** Challenge."

Peace Love World founder helps community

Alina Villasante, founder and designer of Peace Love World based in Doral, has made sure her company is behind efforts to keep the community inspired and assisted.

Peace Love World has donated over 9,000 clothing items valued at $350,000 to the children of Jackson Health Foundation, PATCHES Medical Daycare, Greater Miami Jewish Federation, Nicklaus Children's Hospital, Chapman Partnership, Lotus House, Camillus House and Baptist Health.

Villasante, a Miami Beach resident who was born in Cuba and raised in New York, is also an ambassador for the Baptist Health "Wear A ***Mask*** Challenge."

"Peace Love World is my destiny and through life's many hurdles, I stick through my mission and purpose. The epitome of always keeping the light on even in the dark," Villasante said.

"The pandemic has been extremely hard for everyone professionally and personally. One thing that continues to be a main factor in my life is that community is everything. First, being a part of the Baptist ***Mask*** Campaign has allowed me to bring awareness to such an important aspect in our 'new normal' and show my neighbors who I wear my ***mask*** for. It's so important to support each other during this time.

"Second, being able to give back to the children in our local hospitals has been incredibly impactful on my life."

Learn more about the Wear One, Share One Baptist Health Campaign with the mission that "Sharing is caring" at [*https://baptisthealth-coronavirus.com/community-support/wear-a-****mask****-challenge*](https://baptisthealth-coronavirus.com/community-support/wear-a-mask-challenge)

Tree project honors Sallye Jude

Sallye Garrigan Jude, longtime member of the Coral Gables Garden Club and advocate for environmental issues, is being honored in the new community outreach initiative to increase the urban canopy of trees. Jude joined the Garden Club in 1983.

Club members are collecting donations to plant shade or flowering trees at each of the five Miami-Dade County public schools that are within the Coral Gables boundaries.

Jude was honored during the Sept. 22 Coral Gables City Commission virtual meeting with the Project Canopy Proclamation that states "a Garden Club committee has organized Project Canopy, coordinating with school Principals and PTSA Presidents, and agreed unanimously to fund the plantings of (3) 14 ft. shade trees for five public schools. The Garden Club's commitment is a total of $11,000. This project is dedicated to Sallye Garrigan Jude, a longtime Member of the Coral Gables Garden Club, and advocate for Environmental issues for many years."

Jude, the Garden Club states, "has spent a lifetime as an active member and leader in a multitude of organizations promoting the love of gardening, the beautification of our City and the care of our planet. Her lifelong love of trees is well known throughout the South Florida and Coral Gables communities."

Those who would like to give a tax-deductible donation to Project Canopy in her honor can go to [*https://www.coralgablesgardenclub.org/project-canopy*](https://www.coralgablesgardenclub.org/project-canopy)/

Bike challenge helps Legal Aid

"Speeding Lawfully" will take the place of Dade Legal Aid's annual Patently Impossible Project this year. The virtual bike challenge will be at 10 a.m., Oct. 25 and is expected to draw several hundred supporters to raise funds for Dade Legal Aid clients impacted by ***COVID***-19.

"Speeding Lawfully is a socially distant bike challenge for anyone from every fitness level," said Jaime Rich Vining.

"All proceeds from the event will help Dade Legal Aid and its Pro Bono Project, Put Something Back, to continue providing equal access to justice to low-income residents of Miami-Dade County in need of civil legal assistance including those that are adversely impacted by the pandemic."

Vining has been Chair of the Intellectual Property Committee for more than a decade. Tickets can be purchased online at [*www.dadelegalaid.org*](http://www.dadelegalaid.org) Suggested donation is $75. Write to [*jrv@friedlandvining.com*](mailto:jrv@friedlandvining.com) for sponsorship information.

If you have news for this column, write to [*ChristinaMMayo@gmail.com*](mailto:ChristinaMMayo@gmail.com)

**Load-Date:** October 12, 2020

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*How do I vote and make sure it is counted in Florida's election? Follow this guide*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6122-PTN1-DYJM-M42P-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

October 10, 2020 Saturday

Copyright 2020 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** voters\_guide

**Length:** 3614 words

**Byline:**  Howard Cohen

Miami Herald

**Body**

Floridians are voting. And voting. And voting.

You are lining up at early voting centers open this week, and you are also mailing in or dropping off your ballots.

How Floridians are voting: The latest numbers on October 26

Floridians are voting in record numbers ahead of the Nov. 3 election.

By the first Friday morning of the early voting two-week period, state data showed that more than 4.7 million Floridians had cast ballots, already equal to about half the entire turnout in Florida in 2016. And that's more than the 4.6 million votes President Donald Trump scored in Florida in the 2016 election that helped him win the White House, according to Newsweek.

Despite the response, many have questions on the voting process.

You may want to know if you can vote at any location on Election Day, Nov. 3. You may have a vote-by-mail ballot in hand but are concerned about mailing it back. Can you show up at a precinct and vote in person anyway?

You've also never voted in a pandemic unless you're 120 years old and voted in the mid-term 1918 elections during the Spanish flu pandemic. (Woodrow Wilson was the incumbent president in the middle of his second term so you didn't have to vote for a president that year.) Now, with ***COVID***-19, you are wondering how to safely navigate the polling stations during the early voting period or on Election Day.

Here's one answer: Mail-in ballots have to arrive by the 7 p.m. Nov. 3 deadline for the race to decide if President Donald Trump gets a second term or if it's former Vice President Joe Biden's turn to become only the 14th man to serve as both VP and, later, U.S. president.

There are plenty of other contests to decide on the ballot, too.

Get ready for the 2020 elections with your local ballots, candidate information and more2020 Voter Guide

There are mayors' seats up for grabs, as in Miami-Dade's race between Steve Bovo and ***Daniella Levine Cava***. State representatives and congressional seats need to be filled. Local municipalities have council and commission positions vying for your vote.

There are also amendments to consider. Florida voters could ask for a higher minimum wage over the next six years, for instance. Broward County is asking voters to decide who they want for sheriff.

How to vote by mail in Florida: A quick guideHere's everything you need to know about voting by mail in Florida.

Hopefully, this voting guide -- which we will update regularly before Election Day on Nov. 3 -- answers some of your questions.

Can I vote in the Nov. 3 election?

Are you an American citizen and are you a registered voter? If so, you should be able to cast your ballot.

110 SOULS TO THE POLLS DS.jpgPeople walk outside the South Dade Regional Library during early voting for the general election at on Sunday, October 25, 2020, in Miami, Florida.

When can I vote?

You have options. Vote on Election Day, Tuesday, Nov. 3, at your assigned precinct.

Or vote by mail now and your ballot must arrive at the elections department office by 7 p.m. on Election Day, Nov. 3.

Or vote in the two-week early voting window that runs 7 a.m.-7 p.m. Monday-Sunday Oct. 19-Nov. 1 in Miami-Dade, Broward and Palm Beach counties. Monroe County's early voting time frame is 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m. Oct. 19-Oct. 31.

Early voting for president, local races starts Monday. Here's where in South Florida

Where can I vote?

Until Oct. 19, your only option is to vote by mail. But if you prefer, you can take your ballot to a drop box at an early voting location.

If you're worried about mailing your mail-in ballot, there is another way to return it

From Oct. 19 through Nov. 1, you can vote in person at any early voting location in your county. Miami-Dade voters have 33 early voting locations. Broward voters have 24 secure drop-off locations around the county to choose from.

On Election Day, Nov. 3, you have to vote at your assigned precinct.

Can I vote anywhere on Election Day? Here's how to avoid that mistake at the polls

I still don't have a mail-in ballot. Do I have time to ask for one?

Yes. Voters have until 5 p.m. on the 10th day before the Nov. 3 Election Day to request a vote-by-mail ballot. So you have until Oct. 24 to get your request for a mail-in ballot to the election department.

In Miami-Dade, enter your name and birthday into the Miami-Dade website to check your mail ballot status. If you requested one but it never showed up at your home, you can request another ballot from the website. There is a limit of two ballots per person.

If you have any questions, call 305-499-8683.

In Broward, go to the county's website and apply or request a second one if your ballot has yet to arrive.

Call 954-357-7050 if you have questions.

In Monroe County visit the website and request a ballot or a replacement. If you have questions, call 305-292-3416.

In Palm Beach County visit the Palm Beach elections office website and, as in the rest of South Florida, you can check the status of your ballot and request a new one if you need. Questions? Call 561-656-6208.

Where can I drop off a vote-by-mail ballot?

IMG\_2044.jpegThe voter's mail-in ballot drop-off box at Kendall Branch Library at 9101 SW 97th Ave. in Miami, seen here on Oct. 22, 2022, has a drive-thru lane where a poll worker will check to make sure you signed the outside of your envelope and drop it into the box for you. Or you can walk up and drop it into the drop-off box during early voting hours of 7 a.m.-7 p.m. through Nov. 1 in Miami-Dade and Broward.

You can drop off your vote-by-mail ballot at a drop box at an early voting precinct in your county.

Miami-Dade voters who want to hand deliver their vote-by-mail ballot can take it to the Miami-Dade Elections Department at 2700 NW 87th Ave. in Doral or to the Elections Department's Branch Office in the lobby of the Stephen P. Clark Center, 111 NW First St. Miami no later than 7 p.m. on Election Day.

On Nov. 2, the Monday before Election Day and on Election Day Tuesday, two additional locations are available to return a vote-by-mail ballot: North Dade Regional Library at 2455 NW 183rd St. in Miami Gardens, or South Dade Regional Library at 10750 SW 211th St. in Cutler Bay during voting hours of 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

In Broward, you can take your completed ballot to the election department's main office at 115 S. Andrews Ave., Room 102, Fort Lauderdale, on Election Day.

In Palm Beach, voters can drop their ballot off at one of the 18 early voting locations across the county.

In Monroe County, voters can give their completed ballot directly to the Monroe County Supervisor of Elections office or at one of five early voting locations.

What if I have a vote-by-mail ballot in hand but decide to vote in person at my precinct anyway?

You can, under these conditions:

You can't use your mail-in-ballot to vote at your precinct if you change your mind and want to vote in person instead. But you can bring it to your precinct on Election Day and have it canceled so that you can cast your vote inside.

If you don't return the ballot to the precinct, the election will have to confirm the voter's vote-by-mail ballot has not been received by the election's department. If they can not, you can cast a provisional ballot.

I need assistance to vote because I have some issue that makes it difficult. Can someone stand next to me and help me out?

Yes. If you need assistance at the polling station to fill out and cast your ballot you may register a person as your assistant. The person can be a family member, friend or guardian. They can't be your employer or a representative of your employer, according to Florida's Division of Elections. Two members of the Supervisor of Elections' staff can also help you if you don't have anyone else, according to Florida Statute 101.051.

What you would do is fill out a declaration affirming that you need help to cast your ballot. The clerk can help you with the form. Make sure you bring your ID. Also, the person you designate as your assistant has to bring an ID, too, and fill out a form saying that they are to help you.

When you register to vote you can also indicate you need assistance at the polls.

The person helping you can not coerce you in how to vote.

You're given a provisional ballot at the polling place. What does that mean?

Check Your Voter RegistrationIs your voter registration up-to-date? Even if you voted before states and local election offices sometimes purge their voter registration lists. That's why it's a good idea to check your registration now to make sure you can vote on Election Day.

A provisional ballot is given to voters who say they are properly registered in the state and that they're eligible to vote at the precinct in a particular election, but their eligibility cannot be determined right away.

If you are given a provisional ballot when you show up to vote, fill it out as you would a regular ballot. That ballot will then be sealed in a special envelope and sent to a local canvassing board that will determine whether it will be accepted or rejected.

To reduce the chance of having to vote this way, on Election Day make sure you bring proper identification -- a valid photo ID with signature to vote in Florida -- and check out your registration and voter status before you go to the poll. This way, you have a better chance of arriving at the right polling location.

Do I have to wear a ***mask*** and social distance because of ***COVID***-19?

Yes. You will have to wear a ***mask*** when inside a voting precinct and poll workers are supposed to space you out in line so that you are six feet apart. These good practices will remain in effect even if the governor has relaxed standards statewide. ***COVID***-19 has not disappeared.

Do I need to wear a ***mask*** when I vote? How to cast your ballot safely amid ***COVID***-19

Can I take a ballot selfie at the voting booth?

Tips on how to spend your time waiting in line to voteWaiting for long hours to cast your ballot is draining. Here's what you can bring to make standing in line more tolerable.

You can take a selfie with your ballot at the voting booth or, if voting by mail-in ballot, elsewhere, Florida law says.

But you had best be careful to not include "photo bombers," meaning you can not picture anyone else in the image. Make sure only you and/or your ballot is in the photo.

Also, if you're inside the polling station you can take that selfie at the booth but not in front of the ballot counting machines.

Can I post the selfie or ballot online?

109 Early voting general election DS.jpgMiami-Dede resident Zaida Perez shows her sticker after casting her vote on first day of early voting for the general election at Shenandoah Branch Library located at 2111 SW 19th St. on Monday, October 19, 2020, in Miami, Florida.

Florida allows you to post your marked ballot, or selfie, on social media, Business Insider reported. Many states do not.

But the rules above apply. No one else may appear in your selfie photo and no one else's ballot may appear.

The most popular Instagram, Facebook, Twitter et al. #IVoted photos with the little stickers you get after voting at a precinct are totally cool.

Can I bring a "cheat sheet" with me, even if it's on my smart phone, and use it while I fill out my ballot at the precinct?

Yes. This is not school. And who can remember all of the charter questions or whether this or that judge has your yay or nay vote or who your local newspaper's editorial department recommended in the congressional race?

Just don't share your notes or recommendations with the person at the booth next to you when you're inside because that could be considered voter solicitation.

Can I wear a Trump hat or Biden T-shirt when I go vote?

Yes, you can wear clothing or a ***mask*** with your candidate's name, slogan or image on the attire inside the precinct if you are planning to cast a ballot, according to the Miami-Dade and Broward Supervisor of Elections offices.

But what about the uniformed Miami police officer who wore a ***mask*** with Trump's name and a vulgarity printed on it? That's different because his department has rules against its officers "campaigning" or wearing attire with offensive language, according to the police chief.

Can I hand out campaign fliers, sell my handmade Trump and Biden election memorabilia while I am inside the precinct voting?

No.

So even if the person next to you loves your creativity and offers you $20 for your homemade bandanna with one of the candidate's names emblazoned on it in bright yellow and purple lettering you can't make the deal inside the precinct.

That would be considered voter solicitation. Under Florida law that kind of activity, or handing out fliers, is required to be conducted outside of the polling place and from beyond the 150-foot zone surrounding the polling place.

Am I just voting for the president?

Vote for whomever, and in whichever, category you wish. You don't have to vote in every race or in every municipal initiative for your ballot to be counted. However, it is a good idea to familiarize yourself with the races so that you can make your voice heard across the board.

For example, the race for president between President Donald Trump and former Vice President Joe Biden will be on every ballot and, naturally, has dominated national news coverage.

There are also six congressional races in South Florida and 19 state representative races. Some ballots will ask you if you want to retain judges in your district, too. Your ballot will have the local races particular to your district in addition to the common to all races, like president.

What are the six constitutional amendments on the ballot?

There are also six constitutional amendments on Florida's 2020 ballot. They include:

A question to seek approval to gradually raise the minimum wage to $15 an hour by 2026. Florida's current minimum wage is $8.56 hourly.

Changing how primary elections are held so that all registered voters can cast a vote for governor, Legislature and Cabinet-level races. Currently, only voters registered as either a Democrat or a Republican can vote in their party's primary to decide which candidate moves on to the general election.

Requiring 60% voter approval of constitutional amendments in two separate elections.

A limitation on homestead exemptions. Currently, Floridians who move from one homesteaded property to another have two years from Jan. 1 of the year of the sale of the first home to claim the tax benefit. This amendment's language tweak would give homeowners an additional year to do so.

An ad valorem tax discount for spouses of certain deceased veterans who had permanent, combat-related disabilities.

An amendment to alter the wording of the Constitution to say that "only a citizen" of the United States can vote. That's already Florida law. The language tweak would change what currently reads as "every citizen" can vote.

What municipal races are on the ballot?

Ballots\_Broward Miami-Dade.jpgThe general election sample ballots for Broward County (left) and Miami-Dade County.

Miami-Dade voters will select a county commissioner in races for four districts -- 3, 5, 7 and 9.

Miami-Dade will also select a county mayor in a non-partisan race between Steve Bovo over ***Daniella Levine Cava***.

Miami-Dade has three School Board races for districts 3, 5 and 9.

Miami-Dade has three charter amendments on the ballot:

Referendum 1 would require the county to have an Office of Inspector General, which is already required by county law.

Referendum 2 on the Miami-Dade ballot would end special elections to replace mayors or county commissioners when they resign in advance to run for a different office.

Referendum 3 would make primaries for sheriff, elections supervisor and tax collector non-partisan -- the way it stands for the county posts of mayor and commissioner. The county amendment also would maintain the non-partisan status of property appraiser.

Miami-Dade municipalities with local races and/or measures up for vote: Aventura, Biscayne Park, Cutler Bay, Doral, Key Biscayne, Medley, Miami Gardens, Miami Lakes, North Miami Beach, Opa-locka, Palmetto Bay, Pinecrest and Sunny Isles Beach.

There are also ballot measures in Bal Harbour Village, Miami Beach, South Miami and Surfside.

Broward has municipal races for these positions: sheriff, state attorney, public defender, supervisor of elections and School Board District 9 runoff.

IMG\_IMG\_0605050499\_7\_1\_6\_3\_1\_1KFN7K6J\_L465606665.JPGOn Nov. 3, Key West voters will decide whether to limit the size of cruise ships that call on the island's three ports and the number of passengers who may hit the streets.

Monroe County voters in the Florida Keys will select a top prosecutor, settle three County Commission races, vote for two state lawmaker seats and one congressional post.

In addition, Key West voters in City Commission District 6 will decide a runoff between a 15-year incumbent and a political newcomer.

Citywide, voters will have a chance to decide the island's future dealings with the cruise ship industry.

I think I forgot to sign my mail-in ballot. It might be rejected. How can I fix it?

Most instances of rejected ballots are because people forget to sign the red box, election officials say. You must sign your own ballot envelope and, for the most part, only signatures that are vastly different from the one on file are rejected.

MIA\_MIAMIDADEMAIL-INBALLOTS (4)Miami, Florida, October1, 2020- The red box printed on the envelope that is used to mail the completed ballot back. This is where all voters who are voting by mail need to sign. The Miami-Dade County Elections Department mailed more than 530,000 vote-by-mail ballots Thursday, October 1, to voters with a request on file for the November 3, 2020 General Election.

Or, your signature may have changed significantly from even four years ago and may not match the signature on record.

Is there something wrong with your ballot signature? What you can do to make it right

If a signature is missing, or does not match the one on file, elections departments will send a letter (or e-mail or call if that information is included on the envelope) to tell you that you need to fill out an affidavit that verifies that the signature is yours.

The affidavit must be returned to the Supervisor of Elections within two days after Election Day.

Can we make it easier on the postal carrier and put all our signed mail-in ballots into one envelope?

No.

Every voter has a unique voter identification number that is associated with their political party and their home address. Everyone needs to mail back their own ballot.

And use a black or a blue pen to fill in your ballot. Save the pretty red ink for love letters.

How do I update my signature?

In Miami-Dade: To update a signature, download and print the voter registration application on the Miami-Dade Supervisor of Elections website. Forms can also be picked up at Miami-Dade libraries.

After filling the form and signing it, it can be brought to the Miami-Dade Supervisor of Elections anytime from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday at 2700 NW 87th Ave. in Doral. Or mail it to the Supervisor of Elections, P.O. Box 521250, Doral, FL, 33152.

In Broward: To review or update your voter registration information, visit [*https://www.browardsoe.org/Register-to-Vote/How-to-Register*](https://www.browardsoe.org/Register-to-Vote/How-to-Register).

In Palm Beach: The Palm Beach Supervisor of Elections encourages voters to keep their signature up to date. Voters can use an online voter registration application to update the information, and it will add the signature from your driver license or Florida ID card to your voter record. For information call 561-656-6200.

Or you can use a Florida Voter Registration Application to update your signature or identifying mark.

In Monroe: Monroe registered voters can download the form on the Supervisor of Election's website. The form can be mailed to Monroe-Supervisor of Elections, 530 Whitehead St. # 101, Key West FL 33040-6577.

How do I check to see if my mail-in ballot has been received and counted?

In Miami-Dade: To check if your ballot has been accepted, use the election website's Voter Information tool to plug in your information to check your ballot's status.

In Broward: The elections site's Voter Lookup Free Access System lets you to check the status of your ballot and you can also use this page to update your information.

In Palm Beach: The county's main Supervisor of Elections page has a link called My Status. Click My Status to look up your ballot to see if has been received and counted.

In Monroe: To check for the status of a ballot, visit [*www.keys-elections.org/m/Voters/My-Vote-by-Mail-Status*](http://www.keys-elections.org/m/Voters/My-Vote-by-Mail-Status).

I want to be a poll worker. How do I get hired?

Miami Dade Elections department holds job fair for workers for upcoming electionsThere are over 1,000 positions available for temporary assignments from now until the Presidential election in November.

The deadline to apply for training in Miami-Dade passed on Oct. 5 and Broward and Palm Beach counties were already staffed.

But you can apply for future elections in Miami-Dade with an online poll worker application or call 305-499-8448 to complete an application by phone.

In Broward fill out the application at [*www.browardsoe.org/Poll-Worker-Information/Become-a-Poll-Worker*](http://www.browardsoe.org/Poll-Worker-Information/Become-a-Poll-Worker). Or call 954-357-7050 for information.

In Palm Beach fill out the application at [*www.pbcelections.org/Poll-Workers/Requirement*](http://www.pbcelections.org/Poll-Workers/Requirement). Or call 561-656-6200 for information.

In Monroe fill out the application at [*www.keys-elections.org/m/Poll-Worker-Information*](http://www.keys-elections.org/m/Poll-Worker-Information). Or call 305-292-3416.

How do I know poll workers are protected from ***COVID***-19?

The election departments are following Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's recommendations including providing all poll workers with face shields, masks and disposable gloves.

**Load-Date:** October 27, 2020

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*COVID-19 is taking a 'frightening' toll on Miami-Dade's arts and culture groups*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:60V3-HKR1-JC3J-X00X-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

September 14, 2020 Monday

Copyright 2020 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** miami\_dade

**Length:** 4226 words

**Byline:**  Andres Viglucci

Miami Herald

**Body**

For the Frost Museum of Science, the first of Miami-Dade's major cultural institutions to reopen in the face of the coronavirus pandemic, a salvaged summer season was supposed to be something of a grace note in a lost year. It didn't quite work out that way.

When the museum opened in June, administrators were hoping to recapture enough summer traffic, usually the highest of the year, to steady its capsizing finances. But a resurgence of infections in July and August, strict capacity limits and many families' continued reluctance to risk exposure -- even with well-publicized safety protocols -- kept ticket sales at just a quarter of the level of the summer before, CEO Frank Steslow said.

Now, if Congress fails to approve a second hefty federal bailout along the lines of the multi-billion aid program that helped the Frost ride out three months of total closure, Steslow said, the museum may soon confront an existential crisis.

"We're hanging in there, is the best way to describe it," Steslow said. "The good news is, people are interested in coming and they feel safe. But that's a far cry from what we need to continue to pay the bills."

Six months into a pandemic that forced the closure of every museum, theater and performing arts space in the county, Miami-Dade's vital cultural institutions remain in a perilous holding pattern, bleeding millions of dollars in lost revenue while facing a deeply uncertain future.

Social distancing under Oculus 2.jpgVisitors practice social distancing under the Oculus at the Frost Museum of Science, which reopened in June after a three-month ***shutdown*** prompted by the ***COVID***-19 pandemic.

Even as some take tentative reopening steps, most remain shut with no reactivation date yet set. And even after thousands of layoffs and furloughs, and cuts in salaries and benefits, the county's largest cultural organizations still have no firm handle on how bad the losses will eventually be -- or in what kind of shape they will emerge once the epidemic recedes.

To Miami-Dade cultural affairs director Michael Spring, one overriding answer is clear: Most groups will be smaller. Budgets will be slashed and jobs lost, many for good. Some groups may not survive.

The numbers in the latest monthly county survey of local cultural groups are "frightening," Spring said: The total financial hit from lost ticket sales and canceled fundraisers has escalated to more than $99 million, with nearly 16,000 jobs lost, since March.

"The survey demonstrates there is a relentless impact of the pandemic on the arts sector," Spring said.

For some, the situation is already dire. County-owned but independently run Vizcaya Museum and Gardens has turned to the public for help, pleading for donations to keep the doors open to the lavish historic palace, which has high maintenance costs. Last week, the organizers of Art Basel Miami Beach and several leading satellite fairs announced the cancellation of December's editions, a massive blow to Miami-Dade's cultural scene, especially museums and local galleries that enjoy amplified attendance during that week.

MIA\_VIZCAYA-Local00002JAIMiami, Florida, August 12, 2020- Joel Hoffman, executive director of Vizcaya. The museum is struggling during the pandemic and Hoffman is coping with the changes.

Not all the news is grim.

The Institute of Contemporary Art, Miami, reopened Sept. 2 with timed tickets and high demand in spite of sharply limited capacity. All available time slots for the first two weeks were promptly filled, a spokesman said.

The privately run and funded ICA, the first art museum in the county to reopen, is a rare exception because it doesn't depend on ticket sales or public subsidies for its operation. It has retained all its 29 full time staffers, thanks in part to a $527,000 federal PPP check. Still, it is reducing its annual budget by more than $1 million from a pre-***COVID***-19 $6.58 million, to $5.48M for the coming fiscal year.

"We have an extensive donor base that's allowed us to hold steady and face these challenges," ICA artistic director Alex Gartenfeld said. "We re-projected our budget, and we continue to be really blessed."

MIA\_08ICA\_***COVID***-19\_CPJA sign reminds visitors to practice social distancing as Vincent Electra, 23, left, (that is name she provided), and Doug Giraldo, 25, right, cruise through Tomas Esson's exhibition "The GOAT" while wearing masks on members opening day on Wednesday, September 2, 2020 in Miami's Design District.

Miami-Dade Mayor Carlos Gimenez, meanwhile, has pledged to fund the cultural recipients of operational grants and support at the same levels this coming fiscal year, Spring said. The county's cultural affairs department and direct operating subsidies to large institutions such as the Arsht Center for the Performing Arts and Vizcaya top $73 million.

And the county commission unanimously voted to allocate $10 million of its CARES aid from the federal government to arts groups, a move sponsored by Commissioner and mayoral candidate ***Daniella Levine Cava***. Spring called the fund "a lifeline" for the county's cultural sector, which was flourishing before the pandemic hit in March.

The fund will assist groups already receiving operating support from the county as well as those that don't. The latter will be eligible for grants of $5,000 to $15,000, Spring said.

Response to the third portion of the program, designed to aid individual artists, suggests how deeply the pandemic's impact has reached, Spring said: 840 artists applied for assistance with living expenses.

"It is just heartbreaking to hear on some of those applications about what is happening with artists," he said.

Leaders of cultural groups say the county emergency fund could spell survival for many.

"We're insanely fortunate the county has had the vision to do that," said Florida Grand Opera director Susan Danis. "It will make a difference in the continuation of the arts in Miami-Dade."

But the Frost's experience this summer underscores the risk of reopening and burning through money to support full operations while not bringing in enough revenue to keep it up for long.

The question facing museums and performing arts groups, Danis said, is not when they will be allowed to reopen, but when ticket buyers will feel secure enough to come out. Gimenez's closure order does not yet permit live performances inside auditoriums.

Museums are free to once again receive visitors, and some have announced they will follow the ICA's lead. The city-owned, privately run Bass museum in Miami Beach will open Sept. 16 with an extension until January of its pre-***Covid*** exhibition by art star Mickalene Thomas, "Better Nights.," among several new shows. (Admission comes with a free, reusable fabric face ***mask*** designed by artist Carlos Amorales).

The Frost Museum of Art at FIU and the NSU Museum of Art Museum Fort Lauderdale are also reopening this month.

But others, including the Pérez Art Museum Miami, have yet to settle on an a reopening date as officials keep a close watch on the pandemic's course.

"What we're all dealing with is, when is the audience willing to come back? The uncertainty is just insane. You think you can plan something, and then something else happens," Danis said.

Like most groups, the opera company is taking steps to prepare for an eventual return to the stage, planning some small-ensemble performances to be streamed online, Danis said. But no one thinks it will be easy or quick, and most that live to reopen will continue to have lots of work online. Don't expect the swing to virtual performances and exhibits that most institutions have undertaken will wane significantly, Danis and others say, though certainly nothing beats visiting or watching in person.

Some of that online capacity has also come at a cost, as cultural groups develop new ways to present work online -- and perhaps bring in revenue -- as they work to stay limber and better positioned for a future most expect will combine the in-person and the virtual.

To highlight those ongoing endeavors, some 60 groups, including the New World Symphony, Frost Science and the Miami City Ballet have banded together in an online platform dubbed MiamiArtStrong.

"Our arts organizations are doing some smart things, reinventing themselves in ways to stay connected to donors and audiences," Spring noted.

Here is how some of the county's principal cultural institutions are faring amid the pandemic:

ARSHT CENTER

The Arsht Center for the Performing Arts -- home to Miami City Ballet, New World Symphony and Florida Grand Opera's performance seasons -- remains under an emergency closure order and does not anticipate any live artistic performances until January at the earliest, president and CEO Johann Zietsman says. That has forced deep budget reductions that include layoffs, furloughs, reduced hours and salary cuts for all full-time employees.

The publicly subsidized Arsht had been able to stave off large cuts thanks to a $2.1 million forgivable PPP loan from the federal government. Given the cancellation of more than 160 shows, a revenue loss of $11 million and continued uncertainty over reopening, Zietsman and Arsht administrators say they had no choice but to slash the center's $42 million budget by half and its payroll by 58 percent once the PPP ran out.

Although Miami-Dade provides the center $11.65 million annually for upkeep, educational and other community programs, the Arsht relies heavily on ticket sales, venue rentals and other earned revenue to support operations.

Arsht administrators say they're looking into hosting live performances on the center's three stages, without audiences, for later broadcast or online distribution. he center is still set to host the Oct. 15 Presidential debate, though with sharply reduced capacity.

FLORIDA GRAND OPERA

"We are the most intense of the art forms -- singers sing into the air," opera director Danis said, suggesting that chances of unwittingly spreading coronavirus during an opera or rehearsal could be too high to risk anytime soon.

That explains why Danis doesn't expect full operatic performances to resume until next year at the earliest, and why the company, never flush to begin with, will be out easily $2 million this year out of a total original budget of $7 million. The company canceled its last two productions of the 2019-2020 season this spring and its fall performances, losing $1.5 million in ticket sales, she said.

The fiscal plight at the opera has been somewhat relieved because the company last year sold its Doral headquarters and rehearsal space to a private company for $7 million; it now rents space and shares the building with its landlord, Danis said. The proceeds of the sale went to cover old debt and to establish a cash reserve, which has helped ameliorate the impact of the coronavirus closure.

But the company still faces "steep" fixed costs, including rent and storage expenses for costumes and scenery, with no ticket sales and donations drying up, she said. Its administrative staff, which rises to 20 people at the height of its season, is now at nine people, all of whom have seen pay cuts, Danis said.

"I had the sense this was going to last a long time, so we took some tough decisions early on. Everybody's very on board and everyone's working towards the long haul," Danis said of her staff.

The company is experimenting with ways to keep the music going during the pandemic. Six young singers, ages 14 to 24, participated in a two-week, in-person and socially distanced live opera lab at its Doral rehearsal space recently.

No one got sick or infected, Danis said, so she's now planning to bring in five artists for a fall training program to be conducted both live and virtually. She's also contemplating some small performances of arias and duets that could be streamed online.

FROST SCIENCE

In February, the Frost Museum of Science -- built at a cost of $325 million, most of that borne by Miami-Dade taxpayers -- had 130 full-time employees to manage visitors and run operations. The Frost has one salient feature unique among the county's cultural attractions: an aquarium and animal exhibits that require complex, and costly, life systems to maintain.

After it exhausted a $1.55 million in PPP funding and a $160,000 disaster loan it has to repay, the museum is now down to 75 employees. The museum also reduced employee benefits across the board, and has top administrators filling shifts on the museum floors. It's still not enough to balance the books, CEO Steslow said. Before ***COVID***, admissions, concessions and special events accounted for 80 percent of the museum's $18 million budget.

On top of high operating costs, the Frost saw significant extra expense to ensure safety and heightened sanitation to reopen, including the installation of a thermal imaging scanner to take visitors' temperature.

Intensive sanitizing.jpgA crew member carries out intensive sanitizing of a dinosaur skull exhibit at the Frost Museum of Science, which reopened to visitors in June after a three-month closure prompted by the ***COVID***-19 pandemic.

For the current fiscal year, which ends Sept. 30, Steslow expects a drop in revenue of $4 million -- and an equivalent drop for next fiscal year if the low-attendance trend continues for the next several months.

Asked if that's sustainable, Steslow was blunt: "No," he said.

"I think everyone knows we're doing everything we can to save money," Steslow said, but he added that the Frost will likely need additional state and federal aid to survive.

"We're hoping our peer organizations lobby for additional federal support," he said.

Still, there have been bright spots, including some popular new online programs and a successful, sold-out summer camp -- though it was run at severely curtailed capacity, Steslow said. The camp had just eight students per classroom where up to 30 is normal capacity, he said. That kept the summer program limited to 32 students at a time. Another plus: Steslow said the Frost has not been linked to any infections.

MIAMI CHILDREN'S MUSEUM

The nonprofit cultural and educational institution on Watson Island had just come off one of the strongest years in its history when the pandemic hit, CEO Deborah Spiegelman said. A total makeover of exhibits drove an 8% increase in attendance in 2019.

Now its charter K-to-Five school has restarted for its 315 students, and so has its preschool, though online only, she said. But the museum and its extensive in-person programs, which in normal years serve as many as 550,000 kids and parents, remain dormant. And Spiegelman said she can't say yet when it would be prudent to reopen since its primary audience is young children.

"We were the first to close and will probably be the last to open," she said. "It's tough. We don't want to run the risk of either our team becoming infected, or children getting infected and going home to multi-generational families We take a very conservative approach."

Piggie&Gerald\_Zoom.pngA screenshot captures a virtual summer program at the Miami Children's Museum, which remains closed because of the coronavirus pandemic.

The museum hoped to reopen in July, but the summer surge of infections put an end to that plan, so it missed out on its busiest season as well as a popular summer camp.

The hit to the bottom line to the museum's $10 million budget so far has been $2.9 million, Spiegelman said, but it could have been worse. In a stoke of lucky timing, Miami Childrens held its big fundraising gala just before the pandemic erupted, netting nearly $1 million in donations.

"We went into ***COVID*** days having the revenue from that gala. That really helped," she said.

Still, Spiegelman said, with doors shut and no ticket or restaurant revenue coming in, the museum was forced to lay off 70 of its 118 employees.

"I cried a lot. We have an incredibly devoted team of people. We tried to convert and merge job responsibilities where we could," she said.

Spiegelman said the museum avoided one pitfall that some other children's museums across the country encountered. Some reopened too soon, and had to close again as coronavirus cases surged and attendance plummeted.

Confident that families will flock back once it eventually reopens, Spiegalman said she believes Miami Children's will survive and thrive again -- and rehire its full staff.

"When we reopen we hope to bring people back," she said. "I can confidently say the museum will be around for a long time."

MIAMI CITY BALLET

The ballet, widely regarded as one of the country's best, has taken an especially hard hit from the pandemic. It canceled the last two ballets of its past season and sent its dancers home early. Then MCB leaders made hard decision to cancel the full 2020-21 season, having decided it made more sense to set a direction for the company early and clear the deck to begin planning its post-***COVID*** future.

"Quarantining 50 dancers is not possible. It gets very complex," said City Ballet Executive Director Tania Castroverde Moskalenko

The company reduced staff, froze hiring, cut salaries and slashed its projected budget from $23.5 to $11.5 million, but has protected its dancers. All 50 dancers hired for the season have been retained, though the contract length was reduced from 40 weeks to 27 weeks, Castroverde Moskalenko said. Some longstanding donors increased gifts, softening the impact of the cancellation, she said.

But the company stands ready to return to the stage in some fashion if conditions change.

"We just looked at the worst-case scenario," she said. "That doesn't mean we're going to hibernate. We are going to re-imagine what a season under these circumstances will look like. Every day since March 13 has been like whiplash, with new scenarios of what the future might look like. We were at a standstill. We did not want to be paralyzed any longer."

To keep some revenue flowing, the company held a five-week summer school program in person, but cut it to 100 students, or fewer than half the usual number. It hopes to open its school in the fall, but at "greatly reduced" capacity from the typical 800 enrolled students, Castroverde Moskalenko said.

The City Ballet took over a vacant storefront on Lincoln Road Mall near its Miami Beach headquarters at the invitation of the property's landlord, using it for distanced classes or rehearsals. That's reminiscent of its early days, when its home was on the pedestrian mall and rehearsals took place in full public view.

PHOTO-1-4.jpgMiami City Ballet dancer Nicole Stalker rehearses in the new pop-up studio space on Lincoln Road.

It's now exploring the possibility of holding performances outdoors or virtually, Castroverde Moskalenko said.

"***COVID*** is also a great accelerator. It's causing us to question how we've done everything and how we connect with our communities," she said. "It's pushed us into this virtual world."

But some things, she noted, won't change. And that should ensure Miami City Ballet's survival.

"The dancers want to dance, and people want to see the company perform," she said.

NEW WORLD SYMPHONY

Since the New World Symphony closed its Frank Gehry-designed Miami Beach home in March, only a handful of staff have gone in the building to maintain its advanced digital equipment systems. Everyone else, including most of its 80-member staff and the 77 young musician "fellows" who make up the institution's renown training orchestra, was sent home. Live performances at its Beach home and at the Arsht Center for the Performing Arts, where New World is one of three resident companies, were canceled.

The pandemic has taken a big bite out of New World's budget, trimming it from $17 million last year to $13 million. Like YoungArts, though, New World is in a rare position of financial solvency for a Miami-Dade cultural group, thanks an anonymous donor who helped set the organization up with a $100 million endowment.

The symphony resumed its Fall semester on Sept. 8, but it will take place fully online for now. About 30 fellows will be based in Miami, while others will work from other locations, New World president and CEO Howard Herring said. He anticipates all will be in Miami by January, but he can't yet say when full orchestral rehearsals or performances will resume.

"We'll be as vibrant as we've ever been," Herring said. "With our building set-up, we have the digital infrastructure to let our imaginations go wild into this new world."

NewWorld.jpgA screen grab of a virtual session shows New World Symphony fellow Drew Comstock coaching cello student Carlos Rua of the Iberacademy in Medellin, Columbia. The Miami Beach-based symphony has been operating fully online since the ***COVID***-19 pandemic forced closure of Miami-Dade's cultural institutions.

He expects online lessons for fellows will expand from 150 total a year to 750, for instance. The organization's ultra-popular outdoor Wallcasts will balloon from 12 broadcasts to 80 performances, though at first those will be pre-recorded "encore" shows, Herring said.

With appropriate social distancing, Herring said, the park out front where the Wallcasts are projected on the New World building's facade can probably accommodate 400 people.

"We intend to do that as quickly as possible. We think that's the first step to bringing people back," he said.

Every other Friday, New World will also resume its post-***COVID*** "Live from our Living Room" program of live streamlined solo and duo performances.

Much of the digital offering will be made possible by a $500,000 gift from New World trustee Judith Rodin, Herring said.

PAMM

Pérez Art Museum Miami scotched a planned Sept. 1 reopening after the summertime coronavirus surge, but still hopes to welcome visitors again before the month is out, director Franklin Sirmans said.

When it does, the museum will be fully functional, despite a strong financial blow from the extended pandemic ***shutdown***. It has cost the county-supported institution nearly $2.9 million in lost ticket sales and revenue from its popular shop and bayfront restaurant, Verde, which won't reopen until the museum does.

The drop forced PAMM to lay off 15 full-time workers and furlough 54 part-timers while instituting salary cuts for the remaining 49 employees. Salaries account for about 43% of the museum's annual $15 million budget.

To stay in the public eye and bring in some revenue, PAMM ran a brief pop-up shop in the Miami Design District. Meanwhile, crews have been installing a high-profile exhibit of art from Africa and the African diaspora drawn from the collection of developer Jorge Pérez, after whom the museum is named. Sirmans is banking on blockbuster-like attendance to jump-start PAMM's reopening.

"It's going to be amazing," Sirmans said of the exhibit's quality.

The museum has also kept its teaching program going. In conjunction with the Overtown Youth Center, it's been offering a different online program every Thursday that's funded by the Knight Foundation, Sirmans said.

On reopening, Sirmans said, visitors should expect timed ticketing, a suggested route through the museum to ensure social distancing, and "a strong emphasis" on outdoors events and exhibitions in PAMM's lushly landscaped sculpture garden.

YOUNGARTS

Last month, Jewel Malone stepped on the historic campus of the young-artists' group she leads for the first time since the pandemic struck. The perpetual calendar on her desk read March 13, the date when Miami-Dade Mayor Gimenez ordered a countywide lockdown.

Her calendar may have frozen, but much had changed since then. The budget of the National Young Arts Foundation, which focuses on developing talented artists ages 15 to 18 nationwide, was $13 million on that date. Today it's dipped by $3.5 million. But the nonprofit organization is in an enviable position, thanks to a solid $47 million endowment and a wide network of deep-pocketed supporters.

The foundation has retained most of its staff of just under 40 people, and has found ways to continue to employ its extensive team of artists as coaches and teachers as it moves its programs online. Through a closed online portal for alumns, YoungArts provided emergency "micro-grants" of $1,000 to 300 artists by asking for donations and reprogramming other funding, Malone said.

"Many of our artists are going to feel the hurt," Malone said. "We're impacted, too, but we're finding ways to continue to put out resources for the artists who we serve. You are asking artists to continue to create work, but also giving them the ability to make ends meet. That grant is really critical, and donors are opening up their hearts and wallets."

YoungArts will continue its flagship program of rigorous auditions nationwide in which developing artists compete for a year's worth of lessons and coaching. The program, with about 400 student participants every year, culminates at the end of the season with YoungArts Week, a gathering of live performances and exhibitions in Miami at its headquarters in the landmark former Bacardi complex on Biscayne Boulevard.

But all of it will likely be virtual this year given the still-uncertain path of the pandemic, Malone said.

"The conversations about this future are ongoing today. We don't know the long-term impact of this pandemic yet," Malone said. "But we hope it can be the same artistic experience. What we've heard from our faculty is, 'Yes, we can do this.' We're hopeful and grateful to be in this position. We are resilient."

**Load-Date:** September 14, 2020

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Miami-Dade mayor reopening casinos Monday, banking on COVID continuing to improve*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:60PM-P181-JC3J-X15J-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

August 28, 2020 Friday

Copyright 2020 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** miami\_dade

**Length:** 613 words

**Byline:**  Douglas Hanks

Miami Herald

**Body**

Miami-Dade Mayor Carlos Gimenez will allow casinos to reopen Monday after an eight-week closure, lifting restrictions on the entertainment hubs on the same day he lets restaurants resume indoor dining.

Gimenez did not address the decision publicly, but his office issued a press release on the new order. The announced regulations prohibit drinks and food at slot machines and gambling tables, and customers must wear masks while playing. Like restaurant dining rooms, casinos must limit customers to 50% of maximum capacity.

The decision raises the stakes for Gimenez as he prepares for the second significant easing of ***COVID*** restrictions since the coronavirus crisis began in March. New ***COVID*** cases at Miami-Dade hospitals peaked in mid-July, and have been declining since. The two-week average of ***COVID*** tests coming back positive dipped under 10% this week, falling below the rate the county considers acceptable.

Using emergency powers in May and June, he ended about two months of closures he had imposed on thousands of businesses across Miami-Dade, including casinos and restaurants. At the time, ***COVID*** cases were on the decline and hospitals weren't getting swamped by patients with the virus.

That was already changing in early June, when daily ***COVID*** hospital intakes dipped under 40 new patients per day. The trend surged from there, approaching 150 new patients a day by July 4.

Before and after the July Fourth weekend, Gimenez imposed a package of new restrictions, including a countywide ***mask*** mandate and the closure of casinos, movie theaters, banquet halls and restaurant dining rooms.

He also imposed at 10 p.m. ***curfew*** on travel countywide, a policy restaurants pushed to ease in order to generate more dinner sales at the outdoor tables allowed to remain open. Gimenez said he wanted to keep the ***curfew*** in place at least through the Labor Day weekend.

On Tuesday, Gimenez announced plans to lift the restrictions on indoor dining, starting Monday. The new rules require masks for customers unless they're seated and eating or drinking. While the previous cap on seating was four people to a table, Gimenez increased the limit to six once dining rooms reopen. Also this week, Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis lifted state rules restricting fans at Hard Rock Stadium, saying up to 13,000 people could attend games.

The Miccosukee casino, which sits on tribal land in Miami-Dade and follows federal rules, has been open during the county's mandated casino closure. The casino industry has pressed Gimenez to let it resume operations.

Dr. Aileen Marty, an infectious disease expect at Florida International University and an unpaid adviser to Gimenez on ***COVID***, said she considers reopening casinos and indoor dining to be risky.

"My perspective on this is if we do it, we have to have such strong messaging to the community that we're not doing this because it's totally safe," she said. "We're doing this because it's an economic need. We need you to really follow the guidelines."

Gimenez is the Republican candidate for Congress in Florida's 26th Congressional District, challenging freshman Democrat Debbie Mucarsel-Powell. The two county commissioners running to replace him, Esteban "Steve" Bovo Jr. and ***Daniella Levine Cava***, said they both supported the decision.

"With so many industries opening and the stadium allowed 13,000 guests, these businesses --many family-owned -- should not be treated differently," Levine Cava said.

Bovo, until this year a longtime consultant for the Hialeah Park casino, praised Gimenez for allowing more businesses to open. "The best stimulus plan," he said. "The more people back to work the better."

Qualtrics Coverage Needs Survey

**Load-Date:** August 31, 2020

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Restaurant dining rooms set to reopen soon in Miami-Dade as COVID spread eases*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:60NW-DP31-DYJM-M37X-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

August 25, 2020 Tuesday

Copyright 2020 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** miami\_dade

**Length:** 1437 words

**Byline:**  Douglas Hanks, Carlos Frías and Aaron Leibowitz

Miami Herald

**Body**

Miami-Dade will let restaurant dining rooms reopen Aug. 31 after nearly two months of emergency closures to fight the spread of ***COVID***-19.

Mayor Carlos Gimenez said he was loosening the rules as the county's infection rate hovered near the red-line level of 10%.

"This does not mean this is over by a long shot," Gimenez said in an online press conference. "While we're heading in the right direction, we're not out of the woods."

The move by Gimenez, a Republican candidate in Florida's 26th Congressional District, follows pressure from city leaders, restaurant owners, county commissioners and others. Hours before Gimenez made his announcement, Hialeah's mayor declared he would order city police to stop enforcing county restrictions that since July 9 have banned most indoor dining at commercial establishments.

Gimenez also faced criticism for loosening the rules too quickly. County Commissioner ***Daniella Levine Cava***, running to succeed Gimenez as mayor, said Miami-Dade should only allow restaurants to operate at 25% capacity indoors, rather than return to the 50% capacity that Gimenez plans when dining rooms reopen Monday. "We cannot repeat the same mistakes by declaring victory too soon," she said in a statement.

The new rules only take effect after Gimenez signs an emergency order, so the final details aren't known. Gimenez outlined a set of rules that are stricter in some ways and looser in others than the ones restaurants faced during the time when indoor dining was allowed between mid-May and early July.

Gimenez said the prior cap on four customers per table would increase to six -- a concession that drew concern from one of his top ***COVID*** advisers. He also said restaurants must keep exterior doors and windows open to promote ventilation, and switch air conditioners to run at all times to maximize air circulation. Customers also must wear masks until drinks or food are served at a table, a tweak from the prior rule that waived ***mask*** rules when at restaurant tables.

Esteban "Steve" Bovo Jr., the other commissioner running to replace a term-limited Gimenez, was an early critic of the mayor's July order to close restaurant dining rooms. He mostly embraced Gimenez's lifting of the indoor dining ban, but said he wanted a higher capacity cap for restaurants. "This is an encouraging step in the right direction for the real job creators in Miami-Dade County -- small businesses," he said in a statement.

Gimenez's decision sets up another test for Miami-Dade as it recovers from its second surge in ***COVID*** cases. After using emergency powers to shut down businesses declared non-essential in March, Gimenez allowed most to reopen in May and June.

But the recovery from the first ***COVID*** surge was short-lived, and Gimenez began imposing restrictions again ahead of the July 4 holiday. He ordered casinos closed and imposed a ban on indoor dining. Outdoor dining remained legal.

Some other mayors in support

Mike Davey, the Key Biscayne mayor, said city leaders supported the Gimenez plan, at least for now.

"Nobody spoke up and said they thought it was a bad idea to open interior spaces," Davey said after Gimenez conducted a briefing with local mayors. "But we're also very mindful that, if we see a spike, they're probably gonna shut it back down."

Among those in support of the move is Miami Mayor Francis Suarez, who had criticized Gimenez's decision to close indoor dining in early July. Suarez said contact tracing data from the state indicates that a relatively small number of people have said they were exposed at restaurants, while more say their infections likely came from the workplace, at home or from an unknown location.

"I'm not saying it's not possible and there couldn't be evidence in the future that indicates it's a real danger," Suarez said. "I just haven't seen it."

Miami Beach Mayor Dan Gelber said his city would likely follow the county's lead on reopening restaurants and not impose stricter rules that kept restaurants in Miami Beach closed an extra week when Gimenez lifted restrictions on non-essential businesses in May. He said news of the looser rules at restaurants shouldn't make residents more at ease with the broader ***COVID*** risk.

"No one should interpret this as a green light or 'all clear,' as we need to be cautious and continue to follow the rules diligently," he said.

Tuesday's news amplified a week of loosening ***COVID*** rules in Miami-Dade. On Monday, Florida Gov. Ron Desantis joined his fellow Republican, Gimenez, at Hard Rock Stadium to announce state permission for spectators to return for football games under a 20% capacity cap and enhanced rules on masks and social distancing.

The change in restaurant rules also overlaps with reports of ***COVID*** cases at the University of Miami as dormitories reopen and classes resume. "I've asked for a meeting with the University of Miami to see what they're doing about it," Gimenez said. "This is concerning to me. This is how we started some time ago, we saw this spike in young people. We need to curtail as much of that as possible."

Some restaurateurs plan extra precautions

Several South Florida restaurant owners said they plan to take additional steps when they are allowed to reopen.

Joe's Stone Crab owner Stephen Sawitz said the iconic South Beach establishment will require employees to sign in with contact information to aid with tracing in case of a ***COVID***-19 case once the restaurant reopens in October.

"If anyone so much as sneezes, they're going home," he said. "Nobody's taking a chance."

He called the Gimenez announcement a welcome move toward relief from a historic crisis for the region's hospitality industry.

"This is a light at the end of the tunnel," Sawitz said.

Sergio's Cuban restaurant owner Carlos Gazitúa said doctors and infectious disease specialists on the mayor's call encouraged employees to get flu shots as soon as they become available. He is looking into bringing medical professionals to his six open restaurants to offer the shots because people can contract ***COVID***-19 and the flu at the same time.

"I feel positive that this is our path forward," Gazitúa said.

Dr. Aileen Marty, a Florida International University infectious disease specialist and part of a group of medical experts advising Gimenez, gave a qualified endorsement of the mayor's plan. "The risk is significant," she said, because "we are still at a much higher viral burden in the community today than we were when we opened in May."

In May, hospitals reported fewer than 700 ***COVID*** admissions. On Tuesday, ***COVID*** admissions were just below 1,000 countywide. The county's two-week average for "positivity" -- the portion of ***COVID*** tests that come back positive -- was at 8% in late May. On Tuesday, it remained just above 10%. The county's stated goal for positivity rate is for the two-week average to be below 10%.

Marty said she was "not particularly comfortable" with Gimenez's looser seating rules for tables but remains "cautiously optimistic that people will be careful." She said restaurant customers shouldn't sit at tables of six if they are dining with people from other households.

Gimenez said he rejected calls by restaurant owners to change the 10 p.m. ***curfew*** he also imposed in July in an effort to discourage late-night socializing. He said any changes to the ***curfew*** would wait until after the Labor Day weekend, giving Miami-Dade time to see if looser rules at restaurants cause ***COVID*** statistics to get worse.

Forced to clear out by 10 p.m., many restaurants say the ***curfew*** costs them seatings during peak dining hours and worsens an already devastating loss of business from the coronavirus economic slowdown. Restaurants in the northern end of the county face direct competition in Broward, where restaurants already allow limited indoor dining and can serve until 11 p.m.

Restaurant owners have been vocal opponents of Gimenez's July actions. Last-minute lobbying prompted Gimenez to reverse a prior decision to close restaurants entirely in July, and the pressure has been building to reverse his ban on indoor dining. At Tuesday's County Commission meeting, newly reelected Commissioner Joe Martinez said Gimenez "unfairly singled out" restaurants in July, and recalled a recent outing with his wife as an example of why outdoor dining alone would doom restaurants in the South Florida summer.

"We were dying," he said, "and then we got rained on."

Miami Herald staff writer Martin Vassolo contributed to this report.

This story was updated to correct a reference the owner of Joe's Stone Crab made about contact tracing. He was referring to employees, not guests.

Qualtrics Coverage Needs Survey

**Load-Date:** August 26, 2020

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Steve Bannon is busted, educators face schism over schools, and talk of reopening revives questions*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:60NJ-V1Y1-JC3J-X4YX-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

August 23, 2020 Sunday

Copyright 2020 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** politics\_policy\_in\_sunshine\_state

**Length:** 1518 words

**Byline:**  Mary Ellen Klas

Newsletters |

**Body**

It's Monday, Aug. 24, and even the unexpected Florida story sometimes has us flummoxed.

Take the tale of two Florida men snagged, along with President Donald Trump's former campaign manager and ideological point man, Steve Bannon. The three were arrested last week for fleecing hundreds of thousands of donors in an online crowdfunding campaign set up to privately finance construction of Trump's border wall.

Some details you just can't make up: Bannon, who was an early adviser to the president's immigration strategy, was arrested on a yacht belonging to the Chinese billionaire Guo Wengui, a Communist Party dissident accused of working as a double agent for China's government. Wengui is also a Mar-a-Lago member.

Others arrested were Brian Kolfage, of Miramar Beach in the Panhandle, who ran the "We Build the Wall" group and is alleged to have pocketed more than $350,000 to fund a lavish lifestyle, Andrew M. Badolato, a Sarasota-area venture capitalist long tied to Bannon, and Timothy Shea of Colorado.

WHAT (ELSE) WE'RE TALKING ABOUT

Less expected: Tuesday's primary went pretty smoothly. Democrats voted overwhelmingly by mail, casting more than 1.1 million mail ballots before Election Day began. Republicans, who once used absentee voting to build up pre-Election Day leads over Democrats, submitted at least 766,000 mail ballots.

Warnings ahead: In Broward County, activists reported that voters were turned away from the polls during Tuesday's primary because of polling location changes and that there were inaccessible drop boxes for vote-by-mail ballots. Their warning: hitches like those will become worse in November if they go unaddressed.

Convention shut out: If the road to the White House runs through Florida, the road to the Republican Convention apparently doesn't. U.S. Rep. Matt Gaetz was the only Floridian to appear on the convention lineup as of late Sunday. An obvious omission is Gov. Ron DeSantis, who has loyally followed the playbook of the White House during the coronavirus, including going to bat for the president by suggesting he relocate the Republican National Convention to Jacksonville. The notion that Florida would be ***COVID***-safe enough this week to host the event turned out to be a high-risk gamble the governor took at the president's urging. We'll see what kind of kudos he gets from the prime time show this week.

It's all about Trump: Miami-Dade's mayoral race may explain just how polarized this election cycle will get as the non-partisan contest is shaping up to be a proxy for the presidential race. Candidates Steve Bovo, a Republican, and ***Daniella Levine Cava***, a Democrat, are fighting for the vote of independents -- just like Joe Biden and Donald Trump. But voter feelings about the president are so intense that he has been a central feature of both campaigns.

Family fault lines: Tuesday also marked the beginning of what is expected to be one of the most competitive congressional races in the country between Miami Rep. Debbie Mucarsel-Powell and Miami-Dade Mayor Carlos Gimenez. Without missing a beat Tuesday night, Mucarsel-Powell was out with an attack ad featuring the mayor's son, which she was forced to revise. The often-tangled accouterments of Miami politics are becoming a common line of attack between the candidates for Florida's 26th Congressional District.

Tally insiders, take 1: DeSantis named Central Florida real estate agent and legislator Michael La Rosa to the Public Service Commission on Friday, putting his first mark on the powerful board that regulates electricity, water and natural gas in Florida.

Tally insiders, take 2: There is a common denominator between the failed CONNECT unemployment system Florida paid Deloitte Consulting $47 million for and a new, controversial $135 million deal with Deloitte to manage Medicaid data: one man.

WHAT WE'RE WATCHING

Schism over schools: Leon County Circuit Judge Charles Dodson is expected to issue a decision early this week in lawsuits filed by teachers unions challenging Education Commissioner Richard Corcoran's order requiring schools to resume in-person instruction Aug. 31, regardless of the extent of the spread of the coronavirus in their communities. The order provides an exception for districts that get state and local health officials to rule otherwise, but many health officials have refused to weigh in on whether children should return to campuses.

As of Friday, more than two dozen of the state's 67 school districts had already reopened with only about 150,000 children returning to classrooms but in South Florida, about 600,000 public school students are returning to school in a virtual environment only, at least for the short-term.

Last week, the Miami-Dade County school district confirmed that 578 employees had tested positive for coronavirus between March and the end of July.

Virtual answers: What does all this mean for our students and their learning? Please join the Miami Herald for a live-streamed discussion Tuesday, Aug. 25, at 12:30 p.m. to explore the profound impact the coronavirus is having on families with children in school. Register here for "Miami's Learning Curve: Navigating Education Access in a Pandemic," to get answers to important questions for students, teachers and parents.

Hinting at loosening restrictions: Meanwhile, DeSantis had fewer appearances than usual last week, choosing not to hold the traditional pre-storm press conference from the state Emergency Operations Center as his staff had expected on Friday. Earlier in the week, he convened a round-table discussion in Central Florida to continue to elevate the need to focus on rising mental health and drug abuse case numbers. That's when he hinted that the declining case numbers, coming just before most schools are set to reopen across the state, will result in lowering some restrictions in South Florida.

Pressure is mounting: Gimenez, Miami-Dade's mayor, is feeling the pressure to ease ***COVID*** restrictions as the infection rate continues to decline. (The daily rate of positive cases in the county dipping below 10% for several days for the first time since June.) But Miami-Dade still hasn't gotten back to the hospital conditions present the last time Gimenez lifted business restrictions and Dr. Anthony Fauci last week urged him to "stay the course."

On Friday, the county mayor appeared to be preparing a middle ground. He said he will meet with restaurant and casino owners and hinted that he's ready to allow casinos to open, loosen restaurants restrictions, and even allow gathering at Hard Rock Stadium. Meanwhile, Broward has already started some loosening of restaurant hours.

What we'd like to hear: What we'd like to hear from the governor is what he thinks the lessons learned have been since the state rushed to reopen in May with a messaging strategy that focused only on White House talking points.

When Floridians let down their guard and positive case numbers spiraled out of control in June and July, Florida became the epicenter of the nation's ***COVID*** crisis, forcing the governor to impose new limits on bars and restaurants. Only after hospitalizations surged and deaths numbers multiplied did the governor embrace county-imposed ***mask*** mandates. Since then, local governments have hired their own enforcement officers to crack down on partying, imposed stricter limits on restaurants then the state, and hired their own contact investigators to attempt to contain the virus' spread.

Mary and Steve Daniel.jpgMary Daniel took a part-time job as a dishwasher at her husband, Steve's, memory care home in Jacksonville in a desperate attempt to see him after months of isolation. Gov. Ron DeSantis appointed her to the Task Force on the Safe and Limited Re-Opening of Long-Term Care Facilities which on Wednesday has agreed to start allowing limited family visits.

Bright spots: For months, families have watched as their loved ones in nursing homes and assisted living facilities across the state deteriorate in isolation, as sporadic and incomplete testing and prevention policies allowed the virus to spread. Last week, state regulators and industry officials were finally spurred to act by a woman who took a job as a dishwasher just so she could visit her husband at a memory care center. Florida regulators agreed to allow limited nursing home visits of certain family members, and this week the task force has promised to finalize its work.

Questions for the governor: What should be the norm for ***mask*** wearing, social distancing and group gathering when South Florida moves to Phase 2? What is the governor doing to help the many rural areas where the rate of positive ***COVID*** cases remains in double digits? What's being done to prevent another wave?

Stay safe all and remember, the Miami Herald and McClatchy news sites have lifted the paywall on some of our coronavirus-related stories, but we very much need your help. To support vital reporting such as this, please consider a subscription for unlimited digital access.

Know someone who'd like to get this? Send this to a friend to receive our weekly newsletter on politics and policy.

**Load-Date:** August 24, 2020

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Miami-Dade is a COVID hot spot. But political campaigning goes on*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:60JW-V421-JC3J-X02N-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

August 11, 2020 Tuesday

Copyright 2020 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** election

**Length:** 1164 words

**Byline:**  Erin Doherty

Miami Herald

**Body**

The campaign must go on -- even in a coronavirus hot spot.

It's been over a week since early voting began for the Aug. 18 Florida primary, and in Miami-Dade County -- home to the highest number of ***COVID***-19 cases in the state -- candidates and their campaign staffs are stationing themselves outside of early voting locations in a last ditch effort to sway voters.

"You got to keep your distance. You got to follow all the guidelines and make sure everyone stays safe," said Joshua Andino, 22, who spent the first week of early voting at a Hialeah library and a Miami Lakes community center campaigning for Marcia Giordano Hansen, a Miami-Dade judicial candidate. "But at the end of the day, there's only so many ways you can do this, and you want to be able to reach voters at the ballot box and everything, so here we are."

Miami-Dade has been at the epicenter of the outbreak in a state that has been hit particularly hard by the virus. As of Aug. 11, the county had 135,130 confirmed cases and 1,909 deaths.

But those numbers haven't stopped candidates and their volunteers. The county's early voting centers -- there are more than 20 of them across the county -- have become hubs for campaigning. From Miami Gardens to Homestead, many of the voting centers during the first week of early voting brimmed with campaign volunteers erupting into song and chanting slogans, passing out pamphlets and voting cards to potential voters and applying -- and reapplying -- hand sanitizer.

According to the Miami-Dade County Elections Department, the same rules as usual apply for campaign volunteers, so individuals, groups or organizations soliciting votes must stand at least 150 feet away from the entrance to the polling center or early voting site.

So six-foot social distancing isn't a problem.

"I have no fear," said Julio J. Martinez, 77, a former mayor of Hialeah who was campaigning outside John F. Kennedy Library for Esteban "Steve" Bovo Jr., a Republican county commissioner running for Miami-Dade mayor. "I protect myself. I wipe my hands. I have a bottle of disinfectant."

He's volunteered at Hialeah's early voting site every election for more than 40 years. This year is no different, he said.

"This is beautiful, that people are coming out and exercising their right," Martinez said.

Thairol Borrego and Alejandra Tocabens, both 17, stood at the other end of the parking lot from Martinez on the first Friday of early voting holding up a sign for Alex Penelas, a Democratic candidate for Miami-Dade mayor. They aren't old enough to vote, but they wanted a direct way to make a difference, even in the middle of a pandemic.

"We're just trying to get involved with our community and this country's ideals, and we found helping a campaign a way to do so," Tocabens said.

The virus has made campaigning more complicated, Borrego said, but he's encouraged to see most campaign volunteers social distancing and wearing masks.

"It's been a little bit difficult, but I feel like a lot of people are going by the rules and they're actually respecting everyone as far as social distancing," Borrego said. "I'm just very glad that we're doing this, and we continue to work harder to ensure that the people are safe."

Gabriella Ruiz, 20, spent the first Sunday of early voting at the Coral Gables Branch Library to campaign for her mom, Mavel Ruiz, who is running for reelection as a Miami-Dade circuit court judge. For Ruiz, who said she helped with her mother's first campaign in 2014, reaching voters may be a little bit harder this time, but the energy at the polls is still the same.

"It's funny seeing everybody here through a ***mask*** and socially distancing, and sometimes voters are apprehensive to accept things," Ruiz said. "But in many ways, it's the same political atmosphere. Everyone's trying to get their card into voters. But I still think it's fun, even with a pandemic."

In the past week, several early voting sites were bustling as campaigns made their final push to sway voters. In some locations, volunteers swarmed cars, holding up campaign literature and even knocking on car windows. At the North Dade Regional Library in Miami Gardens, trucks with the names of candidates flashing on the front and side blasted music and campaign slogans, while at the West Dade Regional Library in Westchester, an ambulance was called for somebody who had fainted from August heat. And on the first day of early voting at the North Dade Regional Library, two campaign volunteers got into a scuffle over their candidates, prompting a poll worker to intervene.

Campaigns know that early voting sites could be especially important to candidates this year. As of Aug. 11, the number of people voting in-person before Election Day in Miami-Dade was higher this cycle than in 2018, according to data from the Miami-Dade County government website.

Reuben Cox, 64, stood outside the North-Dade Regional Library on the first day of early voting holding up a sign for ***Daniella Levine Cava***, a Democratic candidate for Miami-Dade mayor, and he wore a T-shirt bearing the name of Thomas J. Rebull, a Miami-Dade circuit judge running for reelection.

Cox called the pandemic "a beast of a different nature," but he said he still planned on going to the Miami Gardens voting center every day of early voting, following social distancing requirements and wearing a ***mask***.

"If they tell you to wear masks," he said, "wear masks."

But not all of the campaign action was at the early voting centers. Some candidates, like Jessica Laguerre Hylton, running for House District 117, and Luisa Santos, running for Miami-Dade School Board District 9, split their time between early voting locations and walking door to door to talk to potential voters.

On the first Thursday of early voting, Hylton -- with her 6-month-old daughter and husband in tow -- walked block-by-block through Richmond Heights, knocking on potential voters' doors and leaving sanitized campaign materials on door handles and front steps. Not many people opened their door, but for Hylton, who grew up in Richmond Heights and canvassed just blocks from her old middle school, connecting with just one voter affirms her reason for door-knocking in the first place.

"Everybody wants to be heard. Everybody wants to know that someone cares," Hylton said. "This is home for me. I grew up in South-Dade. I started my business in South-Dade. I fell in love in South-Dade ... so for me, [District] 117, there's no better place for me to be able to give back to a community that has given so much to me."

Across the street, Santos, who said she has been going canvassing every day, trudged from house to house under the unrelenting South Florida sun, knocking, leaving a bag of campaign information, backing up at least six feet and then applying hand sanitizer.

"[We're] really mitigating many of the potential risks that are associated with door-to-door and making sure that we could still help voters make their voice heard in a safe way," Santos said.

**Load-Date:** August 11, 2020

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Coronavirus live updates: Here's what to know in South Florida on August 7*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:60J1-9081-JC3J-X34F-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

August 7, 2020 Friday

Copyright 2020 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** coronavirus

**Length:** 934 words

**Byline:**  Howard Cohen

Miami Herald

**Body**

We're keeping track of the latest news regarding the coronavirus in South Florida and around the state. Check back for updates throughout the day.

They guard the airport and Metrorail, but their sick leave isn't paid. Even with ***COVID***

MIA\_0251Eulenprotest062520Service Employees International Union, Local 32BJ organizer, Andy Cabrera, leads laid off workers from airline contractor Eulen America in a chant as they hold #SOSAmericanAirlines protest in front of America Airlines building in Coral Gables on Thursday, June 25, 2020.

4 p.m.: At a press call Thursday, Miami-Dade workers employed by county contractors along with the union that represents them once again called on county commissioners and Miami-Dade Mayor Carlos Gimenez to pass emergency paid sick leave legislation for county subcontractors.

As county subcontractors, they don't have paid time off -- a measure that could help curb spread of the virus, workers say. An effort to ensure paid leave proposed by Commissioner ***Daniella Levine Cava*** was shot down in May by several county commissioners, including Commissioner Esteban "Steve" Bovo, who compared the request to the economic mandates that exist under communism. Both commissioners are running for Miami-Dade mayor.

Read the story here.

A coronavirus ***vaccine*** by November? Severe outbreaks may speed up research, Fauci says

AP20175586373842.jpgDirector of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases Dr. Anthony Fauci wears a face ***mask*** as he waits to testify before a House Committee on Energy and Commerce on the Trump administration's response to the ***COVID***-19 pandemic on Capitol Hill in Washington on Tuesday, June 23, 2020. (Kevin Dietsch/Pool via AP)

3:45 p.m.: Surging coronavirus cases across the United States may offer one upside, increasing the chances of a ***vaccine*** breakthrough before November, Dr. Anthony Fauci, the leading infectious disease expert on the White House coronavirus task force, told McClatchy in an interview on Friday, McClatchy's White House correspondent Michael Wilner reported.

That could be a silver lining for President Donald Trump, who has been pushing for the discovery of a ***COVID***-19 ***vaccine*** before the November 3 election amid sinking poll numbers over his handling of the pandemic.

The sheer scope of the current outbreak could speed up clinical trials currently underway for potential vaccines, Fauci said, by generating data on their effectiveness more quickly from volunteers located in coronavirus hotspots.

Read the story here.

***COVID*** patient volume changes

3:15 p.m.: ***COVID***-19 patient volume has dropped by more than 400 in the last two weeks. Intensive Care Unit admissions are slowly ticking down a bit, as well.

Conarck tweet 87

Plantation gym owner arrested a third time for violating Broward's ***mask*** mandate

CBS4 gym owner vid

1:30 p.m.: Mike Carnevale, who owns Fitness 1440, a 24-hour gym in west Broward, was arrested for a second time on Thursday after police said he did not make his customers wear masks during workouts at the fitness facility he owns with his wife, Miami Herald news partner CBS4 reported. Wearing masks inside gyms is required by Broward County's executive order. And in Miami-Dade, too.

When he got out of jail, Carnevale returned to the gym on Friday and was promptly busted again for the same violation.

Read the story here.

***COVID***-19 numbers rise as Florida adds 7,686 cases and 180 deaths. Total now over 8,000

12:15 p.m.: Florida's Department of Health on Friday confirmed 7,686 additional cases of ***COVID***-19, pushing the state's known total to 518,075. There were also 180 Florida resident deaths announced, bringing the statewide resident death toll to 7,927.

There were no new non-resident deaths announced, leaving the non-resident death toll at 124. As such, Florida's total death toll now rises to 8,051.

Florida has seen a slight decrease in newly confirmed cases in the past two weeks.

Read the story here.

Broward adds ***COVID*** test site

9:45 a.m.: Broward County Mayor Dale V.C. Holness announced the addition on Monday, Aug. 10, of a drive-thru ***COVID***-19 testing site at Central Broward Park and Broward County Stadium at 3711 NW 11th Pl. in Lauderhill. The site is open 8 a.m.-3 p.m. Monday-Friday. No appointments are necessary.

unnamed (17).jpgBroward's Central Broward Park and Broward County Stadium ***COVID***-19 test site.

Symptom checks and ***COVID*** screenings: Here's what DeSantis' order means for restaurants

9:15 a.m.: Before Wednesday, if a Florida restaurant employee got sick with ***COVID***-19, the state required that they produce two negative tests before returning to work. But the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention changed its guidelines regarding restaurant employees three weeks ago. Now, Florida has changed its tune.

Per a new executive order signed by Gov. Ron DeSantis on Wednesday, restaurant employees who get sick with the highly contagious disease will no longer have to produce negative tests to return to work. Instead they will need to pass a screening for symptoms such as fever, loss of smell, loss of taste or shortness of breath.

Read the story here.

CATCH UP TO START THE DAY

9 a.m.: Here are the coronavirus headlines to catch you up on what's happening around South Florida and the state as Friday begins.

ICE detainee dies at Miami hospital -- Florida's second migrant death since pandemic outbreak.

Florida ***COVID*** cases now past 510,000 as the state sees 7,650 new infections.

In ***COVID*** crisis, Outback Steakhouse is Florida's favorite casual dining restaurant, survey says.

As legal battle over school reopening proceeds, DeSantis stresses importance of sports.

**Load-Date:** August 7, 2020

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*They guard the airport and Metrorail, but their sick leave isn't paid -- even with COVID*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:60J1-YCF1-JC3J-X3S3-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

August 7, 2020 Friday

Copyright 2020 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** business

**Length:** 821 words

**Byline:**  Yadira Lopez

Miami Herald

**Body**

When he leaves for work as a security officer at the Metrorail, Henrique Lopez's 11 and 10-year-old children tell him to stay safe and to wear a ***mask***.

Lopez doesn't need a reminder. On Wednesday he lost a colleague to ***COVID***-19. It's the second of Lopez's coworkers to die from the virus, he said.

As county subcontractors, he and his coworkers don't have paid time off -- a measure that could help curb spread of the virus, workers say. An effort to ensure paid leave proposed by Commissioner ***Daniella Levine Cava*** was shot down in May by several county commissioners, including Commissioner Esteban "Steve" Bovo, who compared the request to the economic mandates that exist under communism. Both commissioners are running for Miami-Dade mayor.

At a press call Thursday, Miami-Dade workers employed by county contractors along with the union that represents them once again called on county commissioners and Miami-Dade Mayor Carlos Gimenez to pass emergency paid sick leave legislation for county subcontractors.

"Most of the security officers and guards don't have a single day of paid sick leave so they face the really difficult decision of going to work because they're not going to get paid for those days," Aldo Muirragui said at the teleconference. He is the Florida staff director for the 32BJ SEIU, the union representing the workers.

Lopez had to stay home for two weeks in March after he got sick with bronchitis, he told the Herald. As the family's sole breadwinner, the illness meant a loss of $1,200 -- money that put him behind on his mortgage, electrical bill and car payment.

As a security guard at the Metrorail, the 61-year-old veteran said he comes in contact with unruly passengers almost daily. He sees between 300 and 500 passengers per day and frequently has to escort passengers out of the Metrorail for not wearing a ***mask***.

"We are coming in very close contact with people that might be sick," Lopez said. "I know several coworkers who became sick and had to leave their job."

The county's decision to reject legislation to offer emergency paid sick leave puts the entire community at risk, said Lily Ostrer, a doctor at Jackson Memorial Hospital.

"We know the best mechanism of prevention is social distancing," Ostrer said during the teleconference. "Unfortunately our county politicians are denying our workers the ability to do that."

Lavonia Darvy has been out of her job as a subcontracted county employee screening personnel at Miami International Airport for one month. She tested positive for ***COVID***-19. Darvy has made things work by borrowing money from family members and asking for extensions on her light and water bills, she said. She's lost out on at least $2,600.

"What I'm going through I don't wish it on anyone," Darvy said. "Not only do you have to care for yourself you have to worry about not getting paid, but you still have bills coming."

She feels frustrated with the county, she added. She's worked at the airport for six years; working without paid time off means when she or her children get sick, she usually has to keep working because she can't afford to stay home.

"The county, they need to be mindful and think about others and not just themselves," Darvy said. "I have family and friends I can go to but I can't say that for everybody."

Darvy said her daughter asked her to switch jobs after feeling that her mom works for a place that doesn't respect her. But Darvy has no choice, she said. When she's cleared, she'll return to work.

"We have seen again and again that paid sick time laws work," said Jared Make, vice president of the national legal nonprofit A Better Balance said Thursday.

The county's own economic impact analysis produced when the paid-time-off legislation was introduced in May notes that the projected increase to costs for businesses would be nominal.

The impact on reduced workplace contagion would result in the program either being "cost neutral or generating cost savings for the employer, with the added benefit of improved public health," according to the memorandum issued by the office of the Commission Auditor.

The legislation would have called on all county contractors except those with 15 or fewer employees to provide seven days of paid sick leave to employees. Approving the legislation would ensure an equal playing field for contractors who do wish to offer paid time off, but would likely be outbid if they did, said Ana Tinsly, senior communications associate for 32BJ SEIU.

"If the County is not going to lead by example, then how can we expect other employers to provide this life saving benefit?" Tinsly wrote in an email. "If Commissioner Bovo and Martinez are saying that giving workers the ability to take time off when they're sick isn't necessary, then you have to question their commitment to stopping the spread of ***COVID*** or any future pandemics. They're letting everyone know that the public health is simply not a concern."

**Load-Date:** August 7, 2020

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Voters and candidates to return to the polls as early voting begins Monday in Miami*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:60H0-3CX1-DYJM-M179-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

August 2, 2020 Sunday

Copyright 2020 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** politics\_government

**Length:** 795 words

**Byline:**  David Smiley

Miami Herald

**Body**

As Florida struggles with one of the worst coronavirus outbreaks in the country, elections supervisors will welcome voters back to the polls Monday, kicking off a two-week run-up to the Aug. 18 Florida primary.

Nearly two dozen early voting centers will open at 7 a.m. in Miami-Dade County, and dozens more in Monroe and Palm Beach counties. Early voting doesn't begin in Broward County until Aug. 8.

The election is Florida's second since the coronavirus pandemic began to spread. Close to 3 million people voted statewide in the March 17 Florida presidential preference primary, 650,000 of whom voted during Florida's two-week early voting period.

At that time, the scope of the pandemic was only beginning to become clear. Now, more than 7,000 Floridians have died of ***COVID***-19, many public venues remain closed and masks are required in public, including the polls.

"I'm not expecting huge crowds," said Miami-Dade Supervisor of Elections Christina White. "We typically don't have them in a primary anyway. When you add in the fact that so many more people are probably voting by mail, that's an added benefit to voters who are intending to vote in person."

Early Voting Hours and Locations in Miami-Dade

Mail voting has been under way for weeks already in Florida as candidates fight to win races for Miami-Dade mayor, state attorney and dozens of other federal, state and local positions on the ballot. As of Sunday morning, roughly 100,000 Miami-Dade voters have voted at home and returned their ballot through the U.S. Postal Service, according to the Florida Division of Elections.

Elections supervisors believe as much as half the vote will come through the mail. Still, hundreds of thousands of people will vote in person across Florida before Election Day.

"We'll be fully staffed, so we're prepared from that perspective," said White. "The poll workers are going to look different. They'll have masks They'll have face shields. We've given them gloves and they're going to be asked to wipe down the common touch points."

Though only light foot traffic is expected, the return of in-person voting will also attract campaigns and candidates, who under normal circumstances pepper voters with last-minute pitches and campaign material as they walk from their car to the voting booth.

Some campaigns say they will skip the 11th-hour courtship, at least during the early days of voting, when turnout tends to be lightest. But others plan to show up as soon as the doors open.

"Obviously, it's a unique election cycle to say the least. We have to take it day by day," said Christian Ulvert, a Democratic political strategist working on multiple South Florida campaigns, including the mayoral campaign of Miami-Dade Commissioner ***Daniella Levine Cava***. "But we thought it was important, especially in down-ballot races, that voters who have final questions before making a decision on a race have an opportunity to talk."

Marlon Hill, a candidate running in a 5-way race for the Miami-Dade County Commission District 9 seat representing South Dade, said he and his team will also be at early voting centers to meet voters and pass out campaign material, including campaign branded face masks. He said in an interview that he and his staff will be sensitive to health concerns, and will be wearing masks and practicing social distancing.

"To make that personal connection is probably the most precious part of the campaign," said Hill. "But we have to be mindful of the circumstances we're working under."

Concerns about the spread of coronavirus at the polls are legitimate. Following the March 17 presidential preference primary, the Broward Supervisor of Elections announced that two poll workers had tested positive for ***COVID***-19. And some candidates, including Broward state Rep. Shevrin Jones, have already come down with ***COVID***-19 themselves.

Jones announced last month that he'd been cleared of ***COVID***-19 after a two-week fight, but said in an interview that he remains concerned about close interactions between his campaign and voters. He said any campaign materials his staff hands out will be distributed in plastic bags, with hand sanitizer.

"I have a huge fear of being in contact with anyone right now because I just believe that it's not safe for anybody," said Jones, one of six Democrats running for a state Senate District 35 seat that straddles Broward and Miami-Dade counties. "With that being said, will I be out at the polls? I'll be out there for a temporary amount of time. I'm not going to be shaking hands. But I'll be there with my ***mask*** on and just letting the voters know I'm present."

Miami-Dade's early voting centers are open to any voter registered in the county. Closing hours, which depend on the day of the week, can be found at [*www.miamidade.gov/elections*](http://www.miamidade.gov/elections).

**Load-Date:** August 2, 2020

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Miami-Dade votes Democrat for president. Levine Cava wants to extend that trend to mayor*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:60DT-31V1-JC3J-X00K-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

July 23, 2020 Thursday

Copyright 2020 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** miami\_dade

**Length:** 2019 words

**Byline:**  Douglas Hanks

Miami Herald

**Body**

When a key committee vote arrived for ***Daniella Levine Cava***'s bill to require paid sick leave for Miami-Dade's private airport and transit security guards, the two-term commissioner and county mayoral candidate had a few things going for her.

Since the 2018 election of ally Eileen Higgins, her fellow Democrats held a majority on the 13-seat County Commission and paid leave is a priority for the party. Miami-Dade already required pay boosts above the state minimum wage for the guards and other county contractors covered by Levine Cava's legislation.

And the vote before fellow Democrat Audrey Edmonson's policy committee arrived on May 7, two months into a coronavirus pandemic when the county was urging people to stay home if they felt sick.

Even so, when the vote came, Levine Cava's proposal died for a lack of a second.

"We think it's kind of crazy. People should have paid sick leave," said Martha Baker, a nurse for the county's Jackson hospital system and president of a local union that backed the legislation and later endorsed Levine Cava. She blamed the failure on commissioners not wanting to give Levine Cava a win in 2020. "Nobody is letting Daniella look good. If you want to get something done, you're almost better off not having Daniella put it out."

As she campaigns from the left as a former social-work executive and the commission's leading environmental advocate, the 64-year-old hopes her appeal will win more converts countywide than it has on the commission. She has the backing of leading local Democrats, including freshman U.S. Rep. Debbie Mucarsel-Powell, and the four Democratic state senators representing Miami-Dade. The Sierra Club endorsed her, and so did Baker's SEIU union and the county union representing employees of the Water and Sewer Department.

A vote against dropping Miami-Dade's 'sanctuary' policy

Levine Cava sits on the more liberal wing of the nonpartisan commission's collection of Democrats. A bipartisan majority in 2017 backed dropping "sanctuary" policies at county jails under pressure from the newly inaugurated president, Donald Trump. (Of the three commissioners running for mayor in the nonpartisan Aug. 18 primary, Levine Cava and Xavier Suarez, an independent, voted against the change; Esteban "Steve" Bovo, a Republican, voted for it.)

"It has become a whole lot more progressive with the addition of Commissioner Cava," said Jean Monestime, a former commission chairman who has been on the board since 2010 and endorsed Levine Cava after dropping out of the mayoral race this spring. He also voted against dropping the sanctuary policy. "She's a natural ally."

A lawyer who unseated a conservative commissioner to win her South Miami-Dade commission seat in 2014, Levine Cava blamed county politics for her more recent obstacles on the board.

"Until I ran for mayor, I got over 500 pieces of legislation passed. ... I was extremely successful in building consensus," she said. "I am not out of step with what the public wants."

Levine Cava touts her environmental record by calling herself the "Water Warrior," and one of her first campaign ads in December showed her in a superhero cape with the title painted on the back. For her campaign slogan, Levine Cava uses "A Mayor Who Cares" to highlight her message of the county's needing to provide more help on affordable housing and other pocketbook challenges.

MIA\_CAVA\_MAYOR\_DAV7Miami-Dade mayoral candidate ***Daniella Levine Cava*** speaks to a group of citizens during a meet and greet event at her Miami Gardens campaign office on Friday, July 3, 2020.

"It's often debated whether county government is responsible for social services. I think county government is responsible for the welfare of our people," she told an audience in December during a discussion on the needs of older residents. "I don't think the county should shy away from that."

At a pizza reception in her campaign's Miami Gardens office on July 3, Levine Cava gathered about a dozen people inside the former tattoo parlor for a question-and-answer period. Mary Turner, a retired bank employee who lives nearby, said through her ***mask*** that one of her daughters moved to Orlando after college because she found it too hard to find a good job in Miami without speaking Spanish.

"We need opportunities," Levine Cava said. Later, she ticked off statistics showing women in Miami-Dade earning 87 cents for every dollar earned by a man, a gap that drops to below 70 cents for Black women. "Its shameful. It's really embarrassing," she said, pledging to address the issue with legislation mandating racial parity for employee compensation in county contracts.

"I've been calling it Black Flight," Levine Cava said. "You know, I have to have the cooperation of the commission. But we're going to have some new commissioners. They're going to think about things in a new way. And I'm going to be working the heck out of them. To do the right thing."

A victory for the recent grandmother would mean the first female mayor in Miami-Dade, and the first mayor who wasn't Cuban-American since Stephen Clark held the post in 1993.

Born to a wealthy family in New York, the Columbia Law graduate moved to Miami in the early 1980s to be with a young Miami doctor she was dating, Robert Cava. After Hurricane Andrew in 1992, she headed up the county's foster-child program. In 1995, she founded the Human Services Coalition of Dade County, an advocacy group and social-services provider that's now known as Catalyst Miami.

In 2014, she quit her job as Catalyst's director to run for the District 8 county commission seat, covering South Miami-Dade. With backing from the Democratic Party she unseated incumbent Lynda Bell, a conservative former Homestead mayor and president of Florida Right to Life.

MIA\_CAVA\_MAYOR\_DAV8Miami-Dade mayoral candidate ***Daniella Levine Cava*** speaks to a group of citizens during a meet and greet event at her Miami Gardens campaign office on Friday, July 3, 2020.

She was Daniella Levine until she ran for office

The win made Levine Cava the commission's wealthiest member, with a net worth now topping $6 million thanks to stock holdings and property she owns with her husband, Robert. Though known as Daniella Levine professionally since moving to Miami, the candidate used her more Spanish-sounding name to run for the commission. "I did think it would communicate that I spoke Spanish -- even though it's not a Spanish name, it's an Italian name," she said at the time.

She won reelection in 2018 by a comfortable margin against a candidate backed by the developers of the American Dream retail theme park planned for Northwest Miami-Dade. She was the lone commissioner to vote against the project. Levine Cava also infuriated some residents in her district by opposing a canal bridge designed to reduce traffic in Palmetto Bay.

She's giving up her final two years on the commission to run for mayor because Florida law required her to resign before qualifying for the race in May.

Rather than quit right away, she made her resignation effective in November, requiring either an appointment or special election in early 2021. If she had left office immediately, the seat could have been filled during the regular county elections in August.

Critics on the commission complained of the cost of a special election in the midst of an economic crisis caused by ***COVID***. The scenario also would let Levine Cava run for her seat again if she doesn't become mayor, but the candidate ruled out that possibility. "I'm done being a county commissioner," she said.

sick pay photo Joshua Lee Bleicher, a Metrorail guard, addresses Miami-Dade commissioners on Thursday, Feb. 13, 2020, about a bill that would require county contractors to provide workers like him paid sick time, family leave and parental leave. At the other lectern, airport guard Roosvelt Derameau waits his turn to speak.

After the coronavirus hit, Levine Cava became the commission's top critic of outgoing Mayor Carlos Gimenez's response. In a series of letters released to the media by her office, Levine Cava demanded the county hire contact tracers to bolster the state's lackluster efforts, provide hotel rooms to give isolation options to people in cramped living quarters and issue a countywide directive to ***stay at home***.

Gimenez, a candidate in the Republican primary for Florida's 26th Congressional District, did eventually take those steps as the ***COVID*** crisis worsened. Levine Cava pointed to Gimenez's steps as vindication for her ***COVID*** plans. Gimenez suggested Levine Cava was more interested in ***COVID*** publicity than guiding the county's response. "This is not the time for politics and is not the time to be campaigning for the next elected office," Gimenez, now a regular on national news programs, wrote Levine Cava on March 23.

On the fundraising front, Levine Cava is a distant second behind the other leading Democrat in the race, former county mayor Alex Penelas, who left office in 2004. At the start of July, he had about $3 million to spend, compared to Levine Cava's $2 million. She remained competitive in the money race thanks largely to two sources of donations.

Hillary Clinton's top donor is Levine Cava's top donor

The first is Donald Sussman, a Fort Lauderdale hedge fund mogul and Hillary Clinton's top 2016 donor, who contributed nearly $900,000 so far to Levine Cava's mayoral effort. The second is Levine Cava and her family, with more than $40,000 coming from the candidate's husband and corporate entities they own together. Levine Cava's mother, Lois Levine, donated more than $170,000.

Levine Cava is counting on a superior get-out-the-vote operation and grassroots support to overcome her money deficit with Penelas and name-recognition gap with Suarez, a former Miami mayor whose son holds the office and is one of the best-known elected officials in Miami-Dade.

While the other six candidates for mayor paid the $2,800 qualifying fee to get on the ballot, Levine Cava's campaign submitted more than 14,000 signatures. That made her the first candidate to qualify for a Miami-Dade mayoral race by petition.

Penelas, the last Democrat elected county mayor, said Levine Cava shouldn't count on Miami-Dade's partisan breakdown giving her a mandate if she can't build support on the commission. He said he supported Levine Cava's sick-leave legislation, but that the effort reflected poorly on her.

"To not even get a second in the middle of a pandemic on a sick-leave policy shows she hasn't built relations," he said. "Going to the 29th floor doesn't solve that problem." The mayor's office is on the 29th floor of county hall.

Levine Cava proposed the legislation before the pandemic. It would have required all but the smallest companies performing outsourced functions for county government -- including security at the airport and Metrorail stations and janitorial crews in county buildings -- to provide seven days of paid sick leave a year.

The May 7 vote in the commission's eight-member Policy Council gave Levine Cava a limited speaking role, because she's not on the panel. Bovo is a member, and slammed the proposal as part of a "Bernie Sanders world" and the kind of policies implemented "in countries like Nicaragua, and Venezuela and in Cuba." He and others on the board warned the higher costs for contractors would lead to fewer jobs during rocky times for Miami-Dade. There was no discussion of public health.

"Obviously, politics played into it," Levine Cava said in a recent interview. "To have the gall to say this would break the bank, when it was pennies on the dollar.. At what expense to the public? How many thousands of people are exposed to the virus because we don't have paid sick leave in county contracts. It's unconscionable."

The Miami Herald has written articles about other candidates for Miami-Dade mayor, and has more to come. Click here to read about Esteban "Steve" Bovo, ***Daniella Levine Cava***, Alex Penelas, Xavier Suarez, and first-time candidates Monique Nicole Barley and Ludmilla Domond.

This post was updated to include more details on contributions from ***Daniella Levine Cava*** and her family.

**Load-Date:** July 28, 2020

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Steve Bovo running for Miami-Dade mayor and against 'liberal agenda'*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:60DT-31V1-JC3J-X00M-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

July 23, 2020 Thursday

Copyright 2020 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** miami\_dade

**Length:** 2289 words

**Byline:**  Douglas Hanks

Miami Herald

**Body**

When the coronavirus crisis entered its fourth month in June, the county commission needed unanimous support to bypass legislative procedure for speedy approval to spend $10 million in federal ***COVID*** aid on rent relief for Miami-Dade's poorest residents.

That's when Steve Bovo blocked the proposal, calling it a hasty attempt to give away taxpayer dollars.

"There's already talk about figuring out how to add more money," to the $10 million proposal, Bovo said at the June 16 meeting. "These government programs, that's all they do. Just add more money."

As he runs for Miami-Dade mayor against fellow commissioners ***Daniella Levine Cava*** and Xavier Suarez, former county mayor Alex Penelas and a trio of first-time candidates, Esteban "Steve" Bovo Jr. has the conservative lane in the contest mostly to himself. The lone Republican officeholder on the ballot, he's also the only one linking himself to President Donald Trump in campaign mailers and criticizing "far-left liberals" who want to turn Miami-Dade into "New York or Seattle."

"The only candidate who speaks to the property owner, and the business owner, has been me," he said in a recent interview. "If you're trying to make your government the solution to everybody's problems in the community, ultimately that puts a strain on services."

Hanks bovo tweet

Though Democrats easily outnumber Republicans in Miami-Dade, a Republican has occupied the nonpartisan mayor's office since Penelas, a Democrat, finished his second term in 2004. Bovo, 58, hopes to extend that streak, leaning on his transit work on the county commission, a pledge not to raise taxes and an appeal to voters wary of a leftward shift if Miami-Dade elects a liberal mayor.

While commission chairman in 2018, Bovo won approval of a countywide tax district along Metrorail routes and other transit segments forecast to divert as much as $1.8 billion in property taxes for the construction of rail and high-speed bus routes. A year later, he passed zoning legislation around Metrorail tracks to encourage development close to transit.

In 2014, he was one of three votes against the ordinance that added gender identity to the county's non-discrimination law. He joined a bipartisan majority in 2017 that endorsed Mayor Carlos Gimenez's dropping "sanctuary" policies that had local jails refusing to hold inmates longer for immigration officers, a measure Levine Cava and Suarez opposed.

MIA\_01BOVOPROFILE\_CPJEsteban "Steve" Bovo, a county commissioner running for Miami-Dade mayor, helps in food distribution at St. Monica's Catholic Church in Miami Gardens, Florida, on Wednesday, June 24, 2020.

Miami-Dade's leading Republican, U.S. Sen. Marco Rubio, came to the Stephen P. Clark Center in 2017 to swear in Bovo as the County Commission's new chairman. The two are longtime friends, and Bovo's wife, Viviana, works in Rubio's office.

Republicans play an outsized role in selecting Miami-Dade's mayor because the contest starts with a nonpartisan August primary where Democrats tend to stay home more than Republicans do.

Democrats had a six-point turnout advantage in the 2016 August mayoral primary. That's compared to a 14-point advantage in the November runoff, when incumbent Carlos Gimenez defeated fellow Republican Raquel Regalado for a second a final term. In fact, Republicans have finished first and second in the three Miami-Dade mayoral races held between 2011 and 2016.

If a candidate wins more than 50% of the Aug. 18 primary vote, the contest ends in August. Otherwise, the top two finishers compete in a fall runoff that ends on Election Day in November. Focusing on Republicans in August makes sense for Bovo to try to secure a slot on the fall ballot, but heading too far right could be problematic, said Sean Foreman, a political science professor at Barry University.

"That's a smart strategy for Bovo to run as the conservative candidate," Foreman said. "Attaching himself to Trump is more tricky."

When Trump came to Miami on July 10, Bovo joined Gimenez at Miami International Airport to greet him, and thanked the president for his "commitment and solidarity" with the people of Venezuela, Nicaragua and Cuba. He bolstered his bid for Republican votes more when Rubio announced his endorsement of Bovo as a mayor "who will stand up to the anarchist Marxist mobs, not surrender to their outrageous demands."

New York native but ties to Cuba

Born in 1952 in Queens, New York, Bovo was named after his father, a veteran of the Bay of Pigs invasion as a member of Brigade 2056. The family moved to New York City in 1960, then to Miami. Bovo graduated from Florida International University with a degree in political science.

A father of five, Bovo said before ***COVID***-19 ended his wife's weekly flights to Capitol Hill, he was regularly juggling commission duties with taking care of their 10-year-old son. "We eat a lot of McDonald's," he said.

Stepson Oscar De la Rosa is the oldest at 28 and sits in the same place on the Hialeah City Council dais that Bovo did. In October, Bovo flew solo from Miami to Tokyo to see his son Stevie, a 26-year-old actor, perform in a touring production of "West Side Story." "I probably spent the first 10 minutes of the show with teary eyes," he said. "You get to see your kid doing what you want to do."

So far, Bovo leads in endorsements from fellow commissioners, with support from three of the four other Republicans on the board: Jose "Pepe" Diaz, Rebeca Sosa, and Javier Souto. Unlike the other two commissioners running for mayor, Bovo was elected board chairman and currently holds a leadership post as Transportation chairman. "I think he was extremely fair and balanced" as chairman, Sosa said. "It's important to have somebody who understands how the county workss ... And how we can work together."

MIA\_02BOVOPROFILE\_CPJStaff for Esteban "Steve" Bovo, a county commissioner running for Miami-Dade mayor and a census liaison, handed out 2020 Census materials as they helped in food distribution at St. Monica's Catholic Church in Miami Gardens on June 24, 2020.

Chairwoman Audrey Edmonson, a Democrat, named Bovo head of the commission's 2020 Census task force, a position that's become a promotional vehicle for him. At a recent Farm Share food-distribution event in Miami Gardens, Bovo was the official host and a mix of campaign and office staffers wore "Team Bovo" shirts to help hand out the food and direct traffic.

Along with packets of English muffins and bags of rice, motorists received a "2020 Census" calendar from the county. It featured a photograph of the 2020 candidate, and the largest letters were reserved for Bovo's name.

"He's having a lot of fun, because he gets to do what he loves," De la Rosa said. "My father is not an overly ambitious man in the private sector. His heart really is with the community."

Bovo took his first public post in 1998, when he was appointed to the Hialeah City Council. He won reelection twice and served as council president. In 2008, he won the first of two terms in the Florida House, then a special election for the County Commission's District 13 seat after the recall of incumbent Natacha Seijas in 2011.

While in the Florida House, Bovo worked as a staff lobbyist for the Miami Children's Hospital (now named after the healthcare foundation launched by golfer Jack Nicklaus). He had worked for the Hialeah Park Casino while on the city council, too, and kept both as clients for a consulting firm he formed after winning the county commission seat. He said he recently parted ways with the hospital as ***COVID*** upended its revenues but that the casino, owned by John Brunetti, remains his firm's only client.

"Both the hospital and the racetrack were gracious enough to want to continue having a relationship with me," he said. "For the racetrack, I was really just a political adviser to the owner of the casino. ... I still had a lot of friends still in Tallahassee, and I would consult with him on how to navigate some things. ... I didn't lobby."

He reported earning $82,000 through his firm, ELB Consulting, according to campaign disclosures. Bovo reported a net worth of $626,000, mostly from a four-bedroom house in Hialeah valued at $526,000.

A few entanglements

Bovo's Republican circle brought political trouble in Miami when friend David Rivera, a former Miami congressman, was sued over an alleged $50 million consulting deal to help Venezuela's state-run oil company boost its political standing in the United States. The arrangement hadn't been disclosed before.

Bovo said Rivera had participated in at least one campaign strategy call before Bovo filed for mayor in September, and the two had talked in early 2020. The scandal forced Bovo to fire his campaign's professional fund-raiser, Esther Nuhfer, after allegations her firm received money from the Venezuela arrangement, too.

Last year, Bovo spoke in favor of a zoning change sought by a project near his district that was represented by De la Rosa through his work for lobbyist and lawyer Felix Lasarte. De la Rosa registered to represent Terra, the Miami developer planning more than 1,000 apartments on vacant land off of Interstate 75 and west of Miami Lakes.

De la Rosa pointed out he was in law school at the time and said he registered to lobby in order to interact with county staffers during the application process. "It was more of a legal internship," he said.

Miami Lakes opposed the zoning change, arguing it would put more pressure to open shuttered I-75 overpasses connecting Miami Lakes with Hialeah. With De la Rosa in the third row of the commission chambers, Bovo joined the unanimous approval of the change, chastising Miami Lakes for "coming to speak on what's happening on the other side of I-75 when their development is impacting what's going on with those bridges."

Bovo said he considered his stepson's role as more lawyer than lobbyist, and that the two didn't discuss the project. "He never lobbied me," he said.

No public polling has been released yet in the 2020 mayor's race. Bovo's in third place in terms of dollars to spend in the race, with about $800,000 in the bank. His top donor so far is Conservative Principles for Florida, a political committee run by Florida Speaker José Oliva, which donated $100,000. Levine Cava started July with about $2 million, and Penelas more than $3 million.

He recently won the endorsement of Miami-Dade's police union, which praised him for "great courage" in fighting the "anti-police narrative" that has become an "existential threat ... to the very safety and security of our residents."

Bovo's campaign literature promises a mix of fiscal conservatism and resistance to the social causes that helped animate recent racial-justice demonstrations in Miami and across the country.

Anti tax, pro Trump

A Bovo door hanger promises a veto for any proposed tax increase on properties as Miami-Dade enters its most serious economic downturn since at least 2007. On Twitter, Bovo has emphasized conservative themes as the Aug. 18 primary gets closer.

"This is what unchecked liberal/socialist cities & states look like," Bovo wrote in a June 19 Twitter post on a report that ANTIFA protesters burned a U.S. flag over a George Washington statue in Portland, Oregon. "What's next? Re-education camps? Redistribution of wealth?"

When Trump turned 74 in June, Bovo wished him happy birthday on Twitter and said: "His leadership and commitment to our nation is greatly appreciated, especially during these times of uncertainty."

Asked to grade Trump's response to the ***COVID*** pandemic, Bovo gave him a B-.

"I think our president relies on a lot of input from a lot of different people that sometimes doesn't get translated into the right communication," he said.

bovo oval office

He added that some Democratic governors and mayors seem determined to break with the Trump administration on ***COVID*** measures. And he sees selective outrage when it comes to Trump's refusal so far to wear a ***mask*** in public.

"They criticize him if he does a political rally for masks," said Bovo, who was wearing a ***mask*** when he greeted a visitor at his campaign office. "But you don't hear a word out of them when it comes to demonstrations."

Bovo's blocking the passage of the Miami-Dade rent-relief program until a later meeting was a chance for him to amplify the divide between him and the more liberal members of an officially nonpartisan county commission where Democrats hold the majority.

The delay drew the ire of housing advocates, and it gave opponents another example of what they see as Bovo touting his conservatism at the expense of people needing help. "He's just playing politics," Levine Cava said. "He's playing to his base."

Bovo pointed out that while the $10 million earmarked for the program came from Washington, it's part of a $478 million relief package to cover all Miami-Dade ***COVID*** expenses. Cities are also seeking portions of that pool of money for their ***COVID*** expenses.

When the relief package came up for a second vote in early July, Bovo joined the board in approving it unanimously.

In an interview, Bovo said he wants Miami-Dade to help residents, but not go overboard with spending.

"What government can't do is embrace a liberal agenda and a liberal policy that is going to collapse the homeowner in this community," he said. "We're probably going to look for ways to make sure county government is fulfilling its core mission, and can we do it within what residents in our community can afford? I think that's going to be a challenge. I'm up for that challenge."

The Miami Herald has written articles about other candidates for Miami-Dade mayor, and has more to come. Click here to read about Esteban "Steve" Bovo, ***Daniella Levine Cava***, Alex Penelas, and Xavier Suarez.

**Load-Date:** July 25, 2020

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Coronavirus debate in Miami-Dade mayor's race: Candidates spar on schools, closures*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:60CN-X9D1-DYJM-M2YH-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

July 17, 2020 Friday

Copyright 2020 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** miami\_dade

**Length:** 808 words

**Byline:**  Douglas Hanks

Miami Herald

**Body**

In the race for Miami-Dade mayor in 2020, a schools plan now comes down to a blunt question: Should they even open?

At a debate Friday, candidate Alex Penelas was the most blunt in answering that question, saying he considered it too risky for classrooms to reopen next month. "It's a very difficult decision," said Penelas, a former two-term county mayor now running for the post again. "But I don't think we're prepared."

The coronavirus pandemic has reshaped politics and upended how the candidates running to replace outgoing Mayor Carlos Gimenez planned to wage their campaigns. It also presents a crisis one of them will likely inherit in November, be it an ongoing fight to contain the virus or merely the economic carnage the response has left behind.

***Daniella Levine Cava***, one of three sitting county commissioners in the race, used her time at the Town of Miami Lakes debate to highlight her public criticism of Gimenez's handling of the crisis and her early calls for expanded contact tracing and isolation options.

"I have been looking at this since January, when it was spreading around the world. By March, my hair was on fire," she told Noticias 23's Ambrosio Hernandez, the moderator for the city event. "The masking was not taken seriously. The testing not taken seriously. And our tracing program is laughable. I can only say there is nothing about the way it was handled that is like how I would have handled it."

Commissioner Esteban "Steve" Bovo used a coronavirus answer to deliver a dig to an opponent's son. Xavier Suarez, a commissioner making second bid for county mayor in 16 years, is the father of Francis Suarez, the Miami mayor who apologized for being photographed without a ***mask*** posing with friends at a crowded Miami restaurant on a weekend night, an apparent violation of existing city and county emergency rules.

"It does not help when the city mayor of Miami preaches one thing, and then goes out to a bar and celebrates with sparkling bottles of champagne," Bovo said from his table at the Universidad Ana G. Mendez school in Miami Lakes. Each candidate got a table, and mostly wore masks until it was their turn to address the camera over the Facebook broadcast.

Suarez, a former Miami mayor himself, called his son "the star" for the city, canceling the Ultra Music and Calle Ocho festival before the ***COVID*** crisis began in early March with a county state of emergency.

He also praised Gimenez's two-month closure of non-essential businesses between March and May but criticized the mayor's announcement in early July that restaurants would have to close again -- a planned order the mayor later narrowed to cover indoor dining only.

"I think to a great extent we did the right things in the beginning. We started opening at the right time," Suarez said. "You never -- all of a sudden, without consultation of anyone -- then retract what you have done and tell all these shops and all these businesses and all these restaurants that have bought inventory, that you're going to shut them down."

Also at the debate was Carlos De Armas, a write-in candidate for the Aug. 16 non-partisan primary for mayor. If no candidate receives more than 50% of the vote, the top two finishers will compete in a November 3 run-off.

De Armas said Miami-Dade failed before ***COVID***-19 even arrived by not being ready. "The government should have a plan in place to fight pandemics," he said. "We didn't have that."

While the school system is governed by its own board, Gimenez and Superintendent Alberto Carvalho said they are meeting on the safest way to conduct classes in the coming months. The next mayor takes office Nov. 17, and could inherit a county government still at the peak of the worst health crisis to hit Miami-Dade in a century.

Asked about school reopening, Suarez didn't take a position. "I'm glad that we have Carvalho as superintendent."

Bovo said reopening the economy can't happen without classrooms, and said staggered schedules and a mix of online learning could help in-person learning return.

"You cannot open your economy unless these schools are equipped and ready," he said. "We need to give them the leeway, and not the pressure, to be able to open when they can keep our children safe."

Levine Cava agreed that the economy can't "open up" without children attending school. "Only a small percentage of our population can work from home and have their children home-schooled," she said. "We need to make sure we have safe places so people can go to work. These children are losing out."

Penelas was the only candidate to say schools shouldn't reopen in August. He pointed to his own daughter's entering the third grade as argument for getting schools open again. "She's been cooped up. She needs that social interaction. It's difficult," he said. But "under current conditions, I don't think we can."

**Load-Date:** July 18, 2020

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*At the 'epicenter' of the COVID pandemic, Miami-Dade mayor resists more closures*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:60BT-C4G1-JC3J-X172-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

July 13, 2020 Monday

Copyright 2020 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** coronavirus

**Length:** 1034 words

**Byline:**  Douglas Hanks and Alex Daugherty

Miami Herald

**Body**

Miami-Dade Mayor Carlos Gimenez said Monday he wants to see if existing restaurant restrictions, an ongoing 10 p.m. ***curfew*** and a countywide ***mask*** order help stabilize the county's alarming ***COVID*** numbers before forcing more businesses to close.

Gimenez is under pressure on both sides, with cities and restaurant groups criticizing last week's ban on indoor dining and Miami-Dade seeing much more coronavirus spread and hospitalizations than when the county mayor ordered all nonessential businesses to close in March.

"We're not there yet. But everything is on the table. I don't think anyone on this call wants to take that drastic step," Gimenez said at a Monday morning online press conference with local doctors advising him on Miami-Dade's ***COVID*** plan. "If we simply follow the rules, and keep our masks on and keep our distance, wash our hands, that we've opened can be done in a relatively safe way. ... Right now, I don't have any intention of going further."

The mayor's press conference was announced after political rivals scheduled their own Monday morning media event to criticize the county's response. Miami-Dade Democrats repeatedly criticized Florida's Republican governor, Ron DeSantis, and Gimenez, a Republican congressional candidate, for failing to communicate on hiring contact tracers.

"I hope that the governor and mayor will come to their senses and work with all of us to act quickly," said Miami-Dade Democratic Rep. Debbie Mucarsel-Powell, whom Gimenez hopes to challenge as the Republican nominee in Florida's 26th Congressional District.

"At best, we have a hole in our leadership at the state level and at the federal level," Democratic state Sen. Oscar Braynon said. "A coordinated effort between federal, state and local leaders would have stopped us from breaking the [***COVID*** case] record yesterday."

Miami flash briefing player embed

County Commissioner ***Daniella Levine Cava***, who is running for Miami-Dade mayor, said DeSantis should activate a temporary field hospital in Miami Beach, which has not accepted a single patient since opening in April but remains open.

"We have a field hospital in Miami Beach, but it hasn't been activated," Levine Cava said. "The governor has said we're bringing in 100 nurses from out of state, but we don't have a plan. We don't have a state plan, we don't have a county plan. Some have estimated we need 10,000 contact tracers. We need to get started."

On Sunday night, Miami Democratic Rep. Donna Shalala. the health secretary under President Bill Clinton, called for a 21-day ***shutdown***.

Doctors call current situation 'extremely grave'

Doctors on Gimenez's call described Miami-Dade's ***COVID*** situation as "extremely grave" and placing the county in the "epicenter" of the current ***COVID*** pandemic that once was ravaging New York and China. They urged the public to comply with county rules on businesses and public spaces, including requirements to wear masks.

"We really need your help. Miami is now the epicenter of the pandemic. What we were seeing in Wuhan five or six months ago, now we are there," said Dr. Lilian Abbo, an infectious disease specialist at the University of Miami and chief of infection control at the county's tax-funded Jackson hospital system.

Miami-Dade's ***COVID*** total of about 67,000 reported cases is on par with the Chinese province of Wuhan's reported total of 50,000 before cases started flattening out in April, but about a third of the deaths -- 1,037 reported in Miami-Dade and about 3,800 in Wuhan. New York City's ***COVID*** measures remain far more alarming than Miami-Dade's. While Miami-Dade is seeing about one in four ***COVID*** tests come back positive, roughly 70% were testing positive at the peak of New York's outbreak in the spring.

But the county numbers are far worse than what Miami-Dade faced when Gimenez reopened restaurants and nonessential businesses on May 18. Then, ***COVID*** patients occupied about 22% of the county's supply of intensive-care beds. On Monday, they occupied 98% of ICU beds.

Abbo said she'd welcome more business restrictions but not at the expense of more people being pushed into financial turmoil.

"Yes, I would love to order a lockdown. However, we are trying to prevent that," she said. "Because we understand how important the economy is ... for people to be able to pay their day-to-day bills and survive."

Gimenez said the public needs to take the ***mask*** rules seriously and make it socially unacceptable to ignore them.

"All of us have to have a little bit of peer pressure in enforcing the rules," he said. "It's not OK to take off your ***mask*** in front of me, thank you very much. Because you may have the virus. As a matter of fact, I may have it. That's the message that needs to be driven home."

He declined to say whether he'd asked the White House to encourage President Donald Trump to cover his face when he flew to Miami late last week and greeted Gimenez without a ***mask***, an apparent violation of the mayor's own emergency rule that masks be worn in public places. The county has not answered what exemption applied to Trump, except that the White House requires people greeting the president to be tested for ***COVID*** ahead of time (as Gimenez said he was).

"The president of the United States has extraordinary measures that protect him," Gimenez said Monday. Trump wore a ***mask*** for the first time in front of the media the next day while visiting a military hospital near the White House on Saturday.

On Monday, Miami Mayor Francis Suarez said he thinks the president and DeSantis should reinforce the wearing of masks, especially if they appear in Miami-Dade County.

"I'd love for the president to come out and say everyone should wear a ***mask*** in public," Suarez told the Miami Herald. "I'd love for the governor to say that as well. There's a segment of the population that listens to them and only then. We would all benefit if they would say that."

Miami Herald staff writer Joey Flechas contributed to this report.

This article was updated to correct statistical information about ***COVID*** cases in the Wuhan province of China, which are close to the totals reported now in Miami-Dade County. This article also was corrected to fix the spelling of Dr. Lilian Abbo's first name.

**Load-Date:** July 14, 2020

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*In Miami-Dade, the challenge of rolling back an economy twice to fight new COVID spike*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:609J-6CP1-DYJM-M41K-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

July 7, 2020 Tuesday

Copyright 2020 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** miami\_dade

**Length:** 1186 words

**Byline:**  Douglas Hanks and Maya Lora

Miami Herald

**Body**

Mayor Carlos Gimenez's office issued a statement Monday announcing sweeping closures of restaurants and gyms coming within 48 hours to reverse weeks of rising ***COVID*** cases and hospitalizations. Then Gimenez spent Monday night and much of Tuesday watering down that plan as business owners begged for relief.

After threatening legal action, gym owners beat back a planned closure in exchange for agreeing to lose current ***mask*** exemptions for strenuous indoor exercise. Restaurant owners still must close dining rooms, but Gimenez agreed to spare outdoor seating.

And his office announced another change Tuesday, when a spokeswoman said the promised Gimenez order was delayed a day and would take effect Thursday.

The series of changes, dropped in press releases, television interviews and Twitter posts, captured the new challenges Gimenez faces as he tries to pull back on a May reopening plan that hasn't prevented record levels of ***COVID*** spread.

"This isn't a game," Miami Lakes CrossFit owner Dominick Maurici said at a press conference organized by some of Gimenez's fellow Republican officeholders to criticize the closure announcements. "We open, close. You're not just playing with the lives of the owners. ... These places keep people sane, they keep them healthy."

That event had a Gimenez ally, Miami-Dade Commissioner Esteban "Steve" Bovo, urging the county mayor to let dining rooms stay open and just boost enforcement for existing ***mask*** and social-distancing rules.

"The businesses here have complied with everything. ... Now we are asking them to close their doors. That's not right," said Bovo, a 2020 candidate for Miami-Dade mayor as Gimenez seeks the Republican nomination for Florida's 26th Congressional District. "My fear is, ultimately, we're going to turn law-abiding people into criminals. Because they need to put food on the table for their families."

Another county commissioner running for mayor, Democrat ***Daniella Levine Cava***, issued a statement criticizing Gimenez's "mixed messages and piecemeal approach" and said the county needs to focus on isolation options for ***COVID*** cases and more investigators to track down contacts that could be infected, too.

"The lack of leadership from the mayor means we have more confusion, and businesses are being ordered to scale back their operations," she said.

A third candidate in the race, former county mayor Alex Penelas, criticized Gimenez for not building support from city leaders before announcing the countywide closures. "Unfortunately, we have seen conflicting messages that have only confused the community," he said at an event announcing his endorsement by Hialeah Mayor Carlos Hernandez.

Tuesday was also the day beaches reopened after a temporary closure by Gimenez during the Fourth of July weekend.

A focus on risky areas

Gimenez said he's trying to focus closures on high-risk areas where large groups gather, and remains opens to ideas from industry to minimize the economic damage. He closed down beaches, strip clubs, movie theaters and casinos last week ahead of the Fourth of July holiday weekend, and imposed early closing times for restaurants and hotel pools.

Restaurant dining rooms, he said, are too risky as hospital intensive-care wards near capacity with 8 out of 10 otherwise available ICU beds occupied by ***COVID*** patients.

"It's unfortunate that the way they do business, you have to take off your masks. ... It's not that they did anything wrong. It's just the nature of the business," he said after taking off his ***mask*** before speaking at an afternoon press conference with Gov. Ron DeSantis in Miami. "In terms of the gyms, we came up with a compromise."

With hospitalization rates at all-time highs, ***COVID*** test results continue to surge above thresholds Miami-Dade set as safe when restaurants and other businesses reopened May 18. While the county's target is to keep the two-week average of positive tests at 10%, the latest daily figure showed 27% of all tests were positive for ***COVID***.

The county's ambulance squads are seeing a growing number of ***COVID*** calls, too. About one in four patients are suspected ***COVID*** cases, according to statistics released Tuesday. A month ago, only about 10% of patients were suspected of ***COVID***.

conarck ambulance

About 8% of the fire department's staff is unable to work because of contracting ***COVID*** or being exposed to it. Most of the 65 employees who tested positive are first-responders, spokeswoman Erika Benitez said.

Order released Tuesday night

Gimenez's office released the order late Tuesday. It stills mean an end to indoor dining, disruption to exercise routines at gyms across the county, and restrictions on Airbnb operations and other short-term vacation rentals.

The order only allows outdoor seating at restaurants with more than eight seats inside. It also mandates that outdoor music be kept at "a decibel level below that of a normal conversation" and that tables can seat no more than four people. The four-person cap applies to members of the same household as well.

It requires masks for everyone inside a gym, and shuts down Airbnb and other short-term rentals as hotel alternatives. The order requires all new short-term rentals to be for at least a month. Occupancy is capped at two people per bedroom, plus an additional two people per property. No more than 10 people can be in a short-term rental as well.

The new short-term rental rules are under fire from Airbnb and local owners, who are pushing for exemptions. "Hotels can stay open, and the short-term rental licenses have to close?" asked Alex Steuben, a Miami Beach owner who wants short-term rentals in condo-hotel buildings exempted. "There's no logic to it at all."

Tongelia Milton, executive director of communications for the YMCA of South Florida, said the new rules will make it harder for the YMCA to return to normal and may even cost the organization memberships.

"We feel that it will make some of our members uncomfortable, exercising with the ***mask*** on," Milton said. "And while we hope that our members will continue to support the Y, we know that some people are going to want to put their memberships on hold or cancel because they're not going to feel comfortable working out in those conditions."

Milton said that while the YMCA is exploring more outdoor activities for its members, making that move is difficult because of the South Florida heat.

But Dennis Lobon, who owns the Miami Strength and Fitness Club near The Falls, said he's required his gym junkies to wear masks since he reopened his facility in June, to minimal complaints.

"Actually, people have complained when they see someone not wearing a ***mask***," Lobon said.

Lobon said that while some gyms shouldn't open because "they don't take the guidelines and the rules seriously," overall, he said he thinks gyms are safe to operate, suggesting they may be safer than supermarkets or other stores, where items or areas are wiped down less frequently.

"It's kind of hard to grasp why they would leave Total Wine open during a pandemic, that would just tear down people's immune systems, and close down studios like mine," Lobon said.

**Load-Date:** July 8, 2020

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Miami-Dade restaurants, gyms closing again under new order targeting COVID surge*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6096-WJV1-DYJM-M073-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

July 6, 2020 Monday

Copyright 2020 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** coronavirus

**Length:** 1481 words

**Byline:**  Douglas Hanks, Samantha Gross and Carlos Frías

Miami Herald

**Body**

Miami-Dade County restaurants must close dining rooms and gyms must shut down again this week under a planned emergency order Mayor Carlos Gimenez announced Monday as he continues to retreat from a May reopening plan that's been unable to prevent a surge in new ***COVID*** cases.

"We want to ensure that our hospitals continue to have the staffing necessary to save lives," Gimenez said in a statement Monday.

The Gimenez emergency order had not been released as of 8 p.m., but the statement said it would take effect Wednesday and also require closures of Airbnb units and all other short-term vacation rentals. After pleas from restaurants, Gimenez agreed to exempt outdoor seating from the closure order, with tables capped at four people and music required to be low enough to prevent the kind of shouting that can spread airborne the virus.

The decree will keep beaches, offices, stores and hair salons open "for now," Gimenez said, hinting at an even broader retreat from a reopening effort that began May 18 when most nonessential businesses were allowed to begin operating again.

With an economic slowdown already shuttering businesses amid high unemployment and cutbacks on spending, the county-ordered restaurant closures promise a second wave in the crisis hitting Miami-Dade's hospitality industry. Collections of hotel taxes plunged nearly 90% in May, and sales at restaurants were down 60%. Miami-Dade's restaurant industry employed about 67,000 people that month, roughly 6% of the county's 1 million non-farm workers, according to state labor statistics.

"It is a hard blow. Now we are not going to have a livelihood," said Lilly Gándara, who owns Spanish restaurant La Dorada in Coral Gables, with her husband, Domingo. "The restaurant is our whole life, it has been for 26 years, and we will continue fighting for it."

Takeout, delivery may continue in Miami-Dade restaurants

Gimenez's first statement described. an end to table service: "I am signing an emergency order that will close restaurants (except for takeout and delivery services)." But in a meeting with restaurant owners Monday night, Gimenez also said he was leaning toward allowing table service outdoors for places where that's an option, participants said. He confirmed the decision with a second statement released after 10 p.m. He said modifications to existing orders will "put the least economic strain possible" on businesses while "keeping the health and well-being" of the community the top priority.

His latest orders drew criticism from both sides for the Republican mayor running for Congress, with Democrats blaming him for an ineffective response and Republicans calling the shutdowns misguided.

"We continue to be two steps behind the virus rather than one step ahead," County Commissioner ***Daniella Levine Cava*** said in a statement. "We have paid with pain and sacrifice, and the lack of leadership means we will have to go back to close our businesses again."

Levine Cava, a Democrat running to succeed Gimenez, called for Miami-Dade to deploy contact tracers to track interactions with newly diagnosed ***COVID*** cases, and to provide isolation options for people who live in close quarters with others.

While Gimenez in May said he wanted 1,000 contact tracers working in Miami-Dade, he has yet to strike a deal with Florida's Health Department to move the current number beyond the few hundred the state says are in place. The county did recently begin offering hotel rooms to let people with ***COVID*** isolate themselves from family, but the administration said only a few of those rooms are occupied at this point.

In Miami Lakes, Mayor Manny Cid urged Gimenez to reconsider pending closures. "This latest ***shutdown*** has the potential to destroy many small businesses," the Republican said in a statement. "We should focus on enforcement, education and compliance with CDC guidelines"

A list of businesses closed for ***COVID*** violations by Miami-Dade police through late June shows 33 establishments were shut down. Of those, 22 were stores, hair salons or barbershops. Four were gyms and three were restaurants. The list released June 26 does not cover closures by city police agencies.

Miami Mayor Francis Suarez: What happens next?

Miami said it shut down six businesses over the weekend. The city's mayor, Francis Suarez, said Miami-Dade needs a strategy for how to manage a ***COVID*** landscape where closures knock down infection rates only temporarily. "I think what's important is we've seen that some of these orders work, but the question is, 'What happens next?' " he said at a City Hall press conference. "In other words, we know that you can't implement these orders forever, and we know that once you undo these orders, things go back to the way that they were."

Marbet Lewis, a Coral Gables lawyer with a specialty in the spirits industry, said her restaurant clients still haven't caught up from having to pay for the May reopening. "Reopening comes with certain costs. Investing in PPE. Investing in signage. Investing in new protocols and training," she said. "They haven't been open long enough to make up those costs."

Miami-Dade's ***COVID*** statistics have been on a grim trajectory since June, blowing through thresholds the Gimenez administration established in May to measure a manageable level of infection in Florida's most hard-hit county. While Miami-Dade's goal is to have fewer than 10% of a day's ***COVID*** tests come back positive, 26% did on Sunday. Until July 1, ***COVID*** patients took up less than 50% of the county's available intensive-care beds. Five days later, ***COVID*** patients occupied about 75% of available ICU beds.

Dr. Aileen Marty, an infectious disease expert at Florida International University who helped Gimenez create his administration's ***COVID*** reopening rules, said it will likely take weeks before drastic steps today show up in declining case numbers. That's because it can take days before symptoms appear, and longer for someone to seek a test. With tests surging, labs are backed up and results can take a week or more.

"It's hard to tell today if we've done enough," she said. Marty said the surge in cases comes from people not being vigilant in following county rules, and not from failings on the new ***COVID*** regimens the county imposed on businesses in allowing them to reopen in May.

"The most frustrating part of all is we squandered all the pain, agony, and economic costs of the first lockdown by behaving inappropriately when we opened back up," she said.

Last week saw Gimenez's first unwinding of a reopening plan that he insists would work if residents would obey the existing rules. He shut down movie theaters, strip clubs, casinos, amusement parks and attractions, and ordered early closing times for restaurants and hotel pools.

In his latest statement, he blamed private graduation celebrations at home, "packed parties" at restaurants and the racial-justice protests that hit their peak at the end of May and the start of June. Miami-Dade has not released contact-tracing data to show the source of the county's ***COVID*** cases, which grew by more than 2,000 Sunday.

State Sen. Annette Taddeo, a Democrat who represents Kendall and surrounding areas in southern Miami-Dade County, said Gimenez is "doing what he has to do" given the lack of aggressive response from state and federal leaders.

"We are running after ***COVID*** instead of getting ahead of it," said Taddeo, who owns a small translation firm in Miami and has yet to bring her four employees back to work. "The last thing we need for our economy is for us to have to shut down again. And it seems like we are going in that direction."

Bill Ohlsen, owner of a Crossfit studio in Wynwood, lost about a third of his customers during the first ***shutdown***. He said he and fellow Crossfit owners are considering legal action or civil disobedience to avoid a second one. "There are 16 or 18 of us, and nobody in this group has reported a single case," he said, noting his studios have limited shared equipment and restrict clients to their own 10-foot squares to promote social distancing. "Malls are still open. Retail is still open. People are still walking by each other in the aisles at grocery stores."

In his statement, Gimenez said Miami-Dade would remain under the 10 p.m. to 6 a.m. ***curfew*** he imposed last week ahead of the holiday weekend.

Gimenez specified office buildings, stores, and barbershops and hair salons would remain open under the new order. He emphasized that more closures could come quickly.

"Beaches will be open on Tuesday, July 7, 2020, but, if we see crowding and people not following the public health rules, I will be forced to close the beaches again," he said.

'I feel beaten down.' Miami restaurant owners face second coronavirus shut down

El Nuevo Herald staff writer Sarah Moreno and Miami Herald staff writer Joey Flechas contributed to this report.

Miami flash briefing player embed

**Load-Date:** July 7, 2020

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*As COVID cases surge, Miami-Dade changes course and requires masks outside at all times*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6087-PYN1-JC3J-X14K-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

July 1, 2020 Wednesday

Copyright 2020 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** coronavirus

**Length:** 1521 words

**Byline:**  Douglas Hanks, Joey Flechas and Martin Vassolo

Miami Herald

**Body**

The worsening spread of coronavirus across Miami-Dade prompted the county mayor Wednesday to mandate masks in all public places, the latest measure designed to reverse a trend that threatens to bring another wave of closure orders for businesses.

Mayor Carlos Gimenez's planned order came the same day Broward announced a more permissive ***mask*** rule in what was described as a regional effort to reverse ***COVID***-19 spikes that are hitting South Florida as part of a national resurgence of the virus. Miami Beach on Wednesday reimposed a ***curfew*** that had lasted from March until June, when beaches reopened after months of emergency ***COVID*** closures.

Gimenez faced criticism for not ordering a countywide ***mask*** decree sooner. Miami and other cities announced their ***mask*** requirements last week as ***COVID*** cases surged, but Gimenez maintained existing county rules were adequate. They require masks inside businesses, in transit vehicles and in other confined spaces, and in locations where social-distancing measures aren't possible. "Does it really make sense for somebody who is walking their dog outdoors by themselves to wear a ***mask***?" he asked in a press conference last week.

He began softening that position during a morning emergency meeting with Miami-Dade commissioners and faced calls there to require masks and expand other efforts to unravel the sources of the county's worst ***COVID*** outbreak yet. In his statement, Gimenez linked the stricter ***mask*** rule to record numbers of ***COVID*** patients in county hospitals, which have begun canceling surgeries to create more room.

"Certain cities already require the use of facial coverings outdoors," Gimenez said in a statement. "Although the masks haven't been required in unincorporated areas of the county because there is more open space, I have made the decision to now require facial coverings countywide in an effort to help our hospitals operate with sufficient staffing to care for all patients."

His reversal captures the urgency facing him and other government administrators, about six weeks after Gimenez began lifting closure orders on businesses first imposed in March during the start of the ***COVID*** emergency. Since the weekend, Gimenez announced the closures of beaches for the July Fourth long weekend and directed restaurants to close by midnight.

More July 4th restrictions

On Wednesday, he announced July 4th rules aimed at tamping down hotel pool parties, a staple of Miami Beach day drinking. His emergency order, which expires July 7, restricted hotel pools to guests and limits poolside alcohol sales to between 11 a.m. and 8 p.m., when they must close. It arrived the same day that Miami Beach re-imposed a ***COVID curfew***, ordering people off the streets after 12:30 a.m. Alcohol sales at stores must end at 8 p.m. within city limits, too.

"The ***curfew*** doesn't solve all the issues, but it certainly manages some of them," said Mayor Dan Gelber, who had complained South Beach "feels like Bourbon Street at times" during the pandemic.

Businesses inside Miami city limits now risk a minimum 10-day ***shutdown*** for violating emergency orders meant to limit the spread of ***COVID***-19.

The emergency order, signed at 9 a.m. Wednesday by City Manager Art Noriega, outlines mandatory closures for businesses found violating "New Normal" rules created by Miami-Dade County when officials reopened part of the local economy. The regulations range from capacity limits to prevent overcrowding and the wearing of face masks in most circumstances, measures to combat the spread of the novel coronavirus.

Young people being blamed

At the online meeting with commissioners, Gimenez maintained the county's capacity caps and ***mask*** rules for businesses would be enough to contain ***COVID*** if people didn't flout them.

Miami-Dade hasn't offered an analysis of the source of the latest ***COVID*** cases beyond state statistics showing known infections are growing fastest among residents between the ages of 18 and 34.

"We think what happened is that young people started doing what young people do. They did not maintain social distancing. They did not wear masks," Gimenez said at the meeting. "They want back to business as usual."

While government actions focus on nightlife, Florida data tracks the largest concentration of new ***COVID*** cases to some of the county's working-class neighborhoods. Miami-Dade is sending "surge" teams to Brownsville, Little Havana and the Homestead area to distribute masks, hand sanitizer and educational materials on how to stop the spread of ***COVID***. Miami-Dade also recently hired a company to provide mobile testing, allowing administrators to deploy the free services to areas where the virus appears to be spreading quickly.

Wendi Walsh, an executive at the Unite Here labor union, which represents hospitality workers, said the demographics of the ***COVID*** "hot spots" suggest Miami-Dade's workplace rules aren't strong enough to protect employees.

"They're getting sick at work and taking it back into their neighborhoods," Walsh said. She said the union gets notified several times a week about a new hospitality worker testing positive for ***COVID*** and that Miami-Dade should have waited longer before allowing hotels, casinos and restaurants to reopen.

"I think we went too quickly," she said. "Unemployment benefits were given through the end of July. yet somehow in mid-May Everyone decided to reopen their doors."

Numbers are bad news

There were no signs of relief in the latest ***COVID*** statistics Gimenez's office released Wednesday. ***COVID*** patients are occupying more intensive-care beds than ever, with 232 occupied. That accounts for about 58% of the available ICU beds countywide, a number that crossed the 50% threshold Monday for the first time since the county began tracking the stats in early April.

Demand for ***COVID*** testing has skyrocketed across Miami-Dade. While testing sites were completing about 1,000 tests daily at the start of June, Tuesday showed 4,000 tests performed. Maurice Kemp, the deputy county mayor overseeing the testing operation, said appointments fill up within minutes each morning.

"Just three to four weeks ago, we were at the point where we could comfortably say anybody in Miami-Dade who wants a test can get a test. We're not there now," Kemp said. "They can get a test, but they'll have to wait."

At the emergency meeting, commissioners pressed county officials on whether Miami-Dade was being aggressive enough in its virus response and conservative enough in reopening. Commissioner Barbara Jordan said she was considering legislation to regulate how the county-owned Adrienne Arsht center could operate during the presidential debate planned for Oct. 15.

The center's director said the town hall format will feature 36 members of the public selected to ask questions of President Donald Trump and Democratic challenger Joe Biden, with an audience of less than 300. Jordan questioned why Miami-Dade should allow more than a few people inside, and whether it was safe to have dozens of questioners instead of just a few moderators. "If we're talking about having sports events without audiences, then certainly we can talk about having a debate without an audience," she said.

Part of Miami-Dade's reopening strategy was to ramp up contact tracing -- the process of tracking down people who have been in close contact with someone who recently caught the virus.

But the county has fallen short on an early Gimenez goal to hire hundreds of contact tracers for Miami-Dade to boost Florida's effort to quickly notify people who had been in close contact with someone diagnosed with the disease. Florida reports having fewer than 200 contact tracers working in Miami-Dade, and Gimenez and his aides said they haven't been able to reach an agreement to expand that number with county dollars.

"We are doing virtually no tracing at all," said Commissioner ***Daniella Levine Cava***, a Gimenez critic and a candidate to succeed him in the 2020 mayoral race.

Jennifer Moon, the deputy mayor overseeing health operations, said confidentiality rules governing ***COVID*** tests make it more complicated to have Miami-Dade join Florida's contact-tracing operation, which she said is growing. "It's a little more complicated than it seems it should be to try and coordinate with the state," she said, but Miami-Dade is benefiting from what Florida is doing. "Contact tracing is what's helping guide us on our targeted testing."

Jean Monestime, a county commissioner, said tougher enforcement hasn't turned the tide on rising ***COVID*** cases and asked what Miami-Dade plans to do as the trend continues to worsen.

"It appears this is not working," Monestime said at the emergency meeting. "Where do we go from here?"

GImenez said he hoped the numbers would improve once Miami-Dade got through the holiday weekend. He did not rule out the kind of broad shutdowns he began ordering in March. He said those would probably come in reverse order, with the last to reopen the most vulnerable to being closed again.

"Beaches, pools, then gyms and dance studios...until we just have the essentials open," he said. "That's not where I want to go. That would be devastating."

**Load-Date:** July 2, 2020

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Miami-Dade's new COVID plan: hotel rooms for the infected, 'surge' teams to hot spots*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:606S-K131-JC3J-X039-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

June 24, 2020 Wednesday

Copyright 2020 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** miami\_dade

**Length:** 757 words

**Byline:**  Douglas Hanks

Miami Herald

**Body**

With coronavirus spread on the rise, Miami-Dade plans to provide free lodging for the infected and dispatch "surge" teams with masks and hand sanitizer to neighborhoods hardest hit by the virus.

The new steps announced by Mayor Carlos Gimenez on Wednesday followed news last week of a crackdown on businesses not enforcing existing ***mask*** rules. Police said Wednesday that its officers so far have closed fewer than a dozen establishments for ***COVID*** violations.

With more hospital beds filled with ***COVID*** cases and daily testing reports smashing through levels the county considers safe, Gimenez said he's hoping a more localized response can slow the spread five weeks after he began lifting closure orders on the economy.

"This surge team will be going into neighborhoods and speaking to residents and businesses about the importance of wearing masks," Gimenez said at an online press conference. "They'll be knocking on doors."

He said the effort would focus on five neighborhoods that are considered ***COVID*** "hot spots": Allapattah, Brownsville and Little Havana in Miami, and Cutler Bay and Homestead in South Dade. About 100 county workers and contractors will visit those areas for a targeted education campaign on ***COVID*** precautions, and to hand out safety kits with masks, sanitizer and other supplies.

Wednesday brought more alarming news on coronavirus statistics in Miami-Dade, part of a worsening trend across Florida and in other parts of the country.

The county's daily report on ***COVID*** tests showed 27 percent came back positive -- more than double the 10 percent threshold that Miami-Dade set as a goal during the reopening process that began May 18. ***COVID*** hospitalizations also hit a new record, with 870 admitted patients countywide.

"It's a serious situation," Dr. Aileen Marty, an infectious disease specialist at Florida International University, said of the rising number of ***COVID*** patients in hospitals and their intensive care units.

gimenez tweet

For hotel rooms, Miami-Dade plans to offer free lodging to people who have ***COVID*** symptoms or have tested positive but don't have a way to isolate themselves at home. That could be because their homes are too small for someone to isolate themselves. Gimenez said hotel rooms would be offered on a case-by-case basis.

The county is already paying for more than 200 hotel rooms for people who were living in homeless shelters and at risk of ***COVID***. For now, Miami-Dade has about 100 hotel rooms to offer people with places to live but unable to socially distance, said Jennifer Moon, the deputy mayor overseeing the effort.

"We're going to be working with the hospitals and Florida's Department of Health so we can identify people who have no other way of being able to isolate," Moon said. "We want to really be able to tamp down the spread of the disease. Especially [with] people who have been tested, have symptoms, but we don't know whether or not they are positive yet. They don't have to be in the hospital. But they really should be self-isolating."

The Gimenez administration was under pressure to take similar steps early in the coronavirus crisis. On March 23, ***Daniella Levine Cava***, a county commissioner running to succeed a term-limited Gimenez in 2020, wrote the mayor and asked him to identify hotels that could be used to house ***COVID*** patients "that have mild symptoms and require minimum healthcare monitoring."

The county did secure two hotels in April, but used those rooms for residents from homeless shelters and healthcare workers. Miami-Dade also may use hotel rooms to isolate people with ***COVID*** who would otherwise evacuate to a county hurricane shelter during a storm.

slater tweet

At the press conference, Gimenez defended his decision not to impose a blanket requirement for wearing masks in public after the mayors of Miami and other cities announced plans for that kind of rule. The county already requires masks inside businesses, in transit vehicles and any "location" where social distancing isn't possible.

"Does it really make sense for somebody who is walking their dog outdoors by themselves to wear a ***mask***?" Gimenez said.

He said he would consider allowing Marlins Park to reopen under an existing order requiring customized ***COVID*** plans for large entertainment and sports venues. But Gimenez said Miami-Dade won't be lifting its remaining closure orders until the current spike in cases recedes.

"We're not opening bars. We're not opening clubs," he said. "That's just asking for trouble."

Herald staff writer Ana Claudia Chacin contributed to this report.

**Load-Date:** June 25, 2020

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Miami-Dade mayor orders crackdown to protect reopening plan as COVID infections spread*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:605G-RXS1-DYJM-M08N-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

June 18, 2020 Thursday

Copyright 2020 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** miami\_dade

**Length:** 956 words

**Byline:**  Douglas Hanks and Linda Robertson

Miami Herald

**Body**

Miami-Dade Mayor Carlos Gimenez said he won't revive old business restrictions to fight worsening ***COVID*** numbers but will order county police to crack down with stricter enforcement.

"We're not going back," Gimenez said in a video address Thursday, his second in two days as coronavirus statistics continue to worsen in Miami-Dade. "We are going to get tough."

The statement was the latest effort by the mayor to blunt Miami-Dade's worsening coronavirus numbers with a call for residents and business owners to follow emergency rules crafted by his administration to reopen much of the economy during the coronavirus pandemic.

After four weeks of businesses operating under the county's detailed restrictions on capacity, social distancing and ***mask*** requirements, the statistics show a reversal in the ***COVID***-19 statistics the mayor had tied to reopening.

Miami-Dade started June with only about 5 percent of the thousands of daily ***COVID***-19 tests coming back positive. Gimenez's reopening plan set a target of keeping that number to an average of 10 percent over two weeks. Almost every day in June saw the positive rate climbing higher, and the average now stands at just under 9 percent.

Hospitals also are seeing more ***COVID***-19 cases, with 644 patients in the county's latest daily report. That's up 10 percent from the number of admissions two weeks ago.

Miami-Dade police have identified only scattered enforcement issues. The agency, which reports to Gimenez, said Thursday that its officers have visited businesses more than 370,000 times since the coronavirus emergency began in March, and issued 1,045 warnings. That meant offending businesses represented far less than 1 percent of the visits.

The agency also reported no citations tied to violations of Gimenez's coronavirus emergency orders, which carry criminal penalties if violated. In his video message, Gimenez said police handed out "citations for non-compliance" with ***COVID*** rules, but his office later said the mayor was referring to warnings issued by police.

Police have required some warned businesses to close on the spot, but most generally reopen the following day once violations are fixed, said Gimenez spokeswoman Patricia Abril. The police business checks will continue, but Gimenez said he will be issuing a new order requiring county approval of a reopening plan once a business is closed for a violation.

"Miami-Dade's education period is over. No more warnings," Gimenez said. "From now on, when we see a violation, we close a business immediately. ... They won't get a free pass to simply open again the next day."

The week began with the mayors of Miami and Miami Beach warning that the countywide numbers looked troubling. Miami Mayor Francis Suarez said the city may ramp up its own efforts to have more businesses and residents comply with regulations.

"We are definitely looking at an enforcement campaign that deals with enforcement of all the rules," he said.

At an appearance at a Doral coronavirus testing site earlier in the day, Gimenez said he planned to ask protest organizers to put more emphasis on anti-***COVID*** measures during future events.

"Is there a direct correlation? Don't know yet. But I'm worried about it," he said, according to NBC 6 footage. "We will begin to give organizers some requirements, talk to them and say, 'Look, we'd like for you to do this. Tell your participants to keep social distancing. We're not going to limit the amount of space that you have.' "

Gimenez, a Republican candidate for Congress in Florida's 26th District, is under pressure to do more to reverse recent ***COVID***-19 trends. ***Daniella Levine Cava***, a Democrat running to succeed him in the nonpartisan mayoral race, urged Gimenez to "dig deeper" and beyond protests at the causes of worsening ***COVID***-19 numbers. She asked for more information on the county's effort to prevent coronavirus spread at nursing homes and assisted living facilities.

"We cannot let our guard down now," she said.

Rebeca Sosa, a commissioner who has warned against Miami-Dade reopening businesses too soon, said she backed stronger calls for enforcement. "We have to make sure the rules are followed," she said. "If not, the numbers will continue to get worse."

Mark Trowbridge, president of the Coral Gables Chamber of Commerce, said enforcement of social-distancing and ***mask***-wearing rules has become a significant part of every business owner's job. They have to walk a fine line between following guidelines for the safety of all and not offending non-compliant patrons. The last thing they want is another ***shutdown*** caused by rising case numbers.

"Enforcing the rules is completely contrary to the 'customer-is-always-right' mentality," he said. "Instead you have to appeal to the 'do-the-right-thing' mentality, but people are frustrated and exhausted and one more perceived personal invasion could send them over the tipping point.

"If they walk in not wearing a ***mask***, do you confront them and risk them walking out and never coming back? If they refuse to have their temperature taken, do you tell them to leave?"

Jill Hornik, owner of Jae's Fine Jewelers on Miracle Mile in Coral Gables, said she has a "Masks Required For Entry" sign on the front door of her store and restricts the number of customers inside to six at a time. She offers masks to customers who don't have them, and only a few have resisted by asking, "Do we have to?"

"The answer is yes but it's all about how you say it," Hornik said. "Most people are willing to comply," she said. "We haven't had to ask anyone to leave.

"The vast majority of people will be conscientious but there are others who don't care. It only takes one to infect many."

Miami Herald staff writer Joey Flechas contributed to this report.

**Load-Date:** June 19, 2020

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*With planning, Miami-Dade can address deep-seated economic challenges post-COVID-19 | Opinion*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5YNY-7R71-DYJM-M18W-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

April 16, 2020 Thursday

Copyright 2020 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** op\_ed

**Length:** 761 words

**Byline:**  ***Daniella Levine Cava***

Miami Herald

**Body**

The crisis that our community is enduring truly is unprecedented. There is no manual to guide us on what comes next.

In South Florida, many have turned to hurricane response as a guiding principle, but the global pandemic that now exceeds half-a-million cases in the United States and more than 8,000 in Miami-Dade County is not anything like a hurricane. In fact, the health and economic pain will be felt for months and years to come, which is why how we plan our next move as a community undoubtedly will shape the next year and our future.

Our guiding principles to embrace the new world we live in today must put collaboration and coordination into overdrive. I have laid out four pillars as a blueprint for the best approach to begin the conversation on what comes next.

Establish a set of benchmarks and data-driven metrics: The most important conversation of what comes next centers around a clear and concise set of benchmarks that will serve as the baseline for steps the county must take to avoid a surge in new cases. The metrics must be set by a group of public-health experts and professionals so elected leaders and the public alike can have faith in the steps the county is taking.

Mass testing capacity: National and international public-health experts and epidemiologists, including Dr. Anthony Fauci, the nation's top infectious-disease professional, have laid out clearly that any plan for a community relaxing its current social-distancing guidelines and closures must depend on the rapid expansion of mass testing. I believe to achieve this goal, the county must appoint a lead official in Miami-Dade, preferably a public-health professional, to coordinate an expanded mass-testing program in Miami-Dade. This will ensure we are able to meet future surges at hospitals with the necessary protective gear and equipment and to protect seniors and vulnerable populations.

Convene a Miami-Dade Forward Action Group: We must rely on community leaders and experts to guide elected officials, and their input must be welcomed and incorporated into the county's plan. A lead action group comprising leaders in public health, big business, small business, labor, tourism, municipal, public schools, universities and the county must be appointed immediately to begin the process. The lead group should be made up of individuals who will serve on a series of subject-area working groups. These subgroups will work in partnership with public-health experts to help establish key sets of metrics that the Action Group will follow as the agreed-upon metrics.

Regional and Municipal Coordination: An important component of how we approach Miami-Dade's next steps relies on a continued regional approach with our colleagues in Monroe, Broward and Palm Beach counties, as our local economy is very much interconnected, and so are our residents. Therefore, having a singular South Florida approach from the start will be pivotal. We must also bring together all the city mayors of Miami-Dade to weigh in on a regional approach to ensure that our municipal partners are invested in the overall strategy.

The county must have direct and transparent communication with the public, for it's the only way we can implement a plan. It must include the reality that there may be times in the coming year, absent a ***vaccine***, that if the numbers show a resurgence of the virus, aggressive social-distancing measures may need to be reinstated once again.

This crisis also shows that far too many families are hurting. We see everyday images of long lines forming, miles deep, at food-distribution locations because of the economic pain of the pandemic. Jobs have been lost, wages evaporated, unemployment benefits have been slow to come and safety nets are being tested like never before.

Short- and long-term plans for continued support systems are required as we know because economic challenges will be felt for months. There is no "on button" to get the economy bustling again. Quite frankly, the pandemic has exposed the deep-rooted affordability crisis that already exists in our neighborhoods and multiplied it by many. As businesses reopen in the future, many in our communities will remain unemployed, underpaid and barely able to get by.

The pandemic won't erase those hard facts. But we have an opportunity to take a new approach to ease the pain and plan for a fairer economy that lifts up everyone. Our next steps will without a doubt shape the next year.

***Daniella Levine Cava*** represents District 8 on the Miami-Dade County Commission. She is a candidate for county mayor.

**Load-Date:** April 16, 2020

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Miami mandates face masks inside grocery stores and pharmacies to curb coronavirus*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5YMD-4N81-JC3J-X4YK-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

April 8, 2020 Wednesday

Copyright 2020 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** miami\_dade

**Length:** 897 words

**Byline:**  Joey Flechas, Martin Vassolo and Douglas Hanks

Miami Herald

**Body**

The city of Miami escalated the response to the ***COVID***-19 pandemic Wednesday when officials mandated that everyone inside grocery stores, pharmacies and convenience stores wear masks or face coverings.

When City Manager Art Noriega signed the paperwork, he issued an emergency order to South Florida's most populous city to curb the spread of the novel coronavirus. It requires all customers and employees at most retail establishments that are still open to cover their faces while inside. The measure also requires all delivery workers to don masks, as well as all construction workers on job sites.

Similar orders have been implemented in Miami Beach, Cutler Bay and Aventura. Monroe County is requiring all people inside all businesses to wear masks.

Miami's ***mask*** requirement goes into effect at midnight Wednesday. Mayor Francis Suarez told the Miami Herald the order will be coupled with increased enforcement, though at first, he expects police officers to help educate people before issuing fines. He said the city expects business owners to enforce the rule, and if there are rampant violations, the city would fine or shut down businesses.

"Obviously when you do this, the hope is you have a vast majority of people complying," Suarez said.

U.S. Surgeon General demonstrates how to make simple face masks U.S. Surgeon General Jerome Adams makes a simple face ***mask*** out of a T-shirt. The government now suggests Americans wear face masks while out in public to slow spread of coronavirus.

In Miami Beach, where the mandatory ***mask*** order took effect Tuesday, supermarkets posted signs outside their doors reminding customers of the new rule.

At a Trader Joe's location on 17th Street, employees stationed at the front door checked if customers had masks. Nearby, at Fresh Market on West Avenue, a sign warned that "anyone not complying will be denied entry." The warning seemed to be more of a recommendation -- two bare-faced men entered the store Wednesday afternoon and only received nasty looks from others at the store.

Daniel Marín, a 35-year-old Miami Beach resident, said he didn't know about the ***mask*** rule, but no one at the store asked him about it.

"The only thing I noticed is the way people look at me," he said. "Absolutely everyone is wearing one."

The city has not issued any citations, but the city's Code Compliance department has made 274 calls for service and investigations related to the face covering rule.

The city of Miramar enacted similar face-covering rules this week, though City Manager Vernon Hargray's order does not restrict employees or customers from entering businesses without masks in emergency circumstances when masks are not readily available.

Suarez said he did not envision people being turned away from grocery stores because they don't have masks, though he urged businesses to educate the public, and he asked Miamians to make homemade masks if they don't have anything to cover their face.

The mayor acknowledged the potentially difficult question of enforcement of the order when manufactured masks are not readily available and when the rule is being implemented overnight.

"It's a delicate balance," he said. "On the one hand you want to promote policies that ensure health and safety. On the other hand, these policies have consequences."

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recently issued guidelines encouraging people to wear cloth face coverings in public settings, such as stores, especially in areas where the coronavirus is being transmitted at higher rates.

The CDC is not recommending people wear masks used by medical professionals, which are in short supply at hospitals.

"The cloth face coverings recommended are not surgical masks or N-95 respirators," reads the CDC guidelines. "Those are critical supplies that must continue to be reserved for healthcare workers and other medical first responders, as recommended by current CDC guidance."

miami ***mask*** order

Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis praised local governments' ***mask*** requirements on Wednesday at a press conference in Miami Beach. Before Miami's order was signed Wednesday afternoon, DeSantis lauded Beach Mayor Dan Gelber on the local requirement to wear masks inside grocery stores and pharmacies.

"I think it's smart. The grocery stores are packed, and when you have close contact, that's how the virus is transmitted," he said. "Having the ***mask***, I think absolutely will cut down on the transmitability of that. We are working to get them more masks."

Miami-Dade Mayor Carlos Gimenez has so far only "urged" residents to wear masks outside, but has not yet issued anything mandatory countywide. He and aides have discussed tougher rules, but he told county commissioners this week there are legal complications.

"There are some issues there that concern me," he said at a Tuesday commission meeting. "Our attorneys have some concerns about that face-***mask*** issue."

Commissioner ***Daniella Levine Cava*** pressed Gimenez to issue Miami-Dade's own ***mask*** requirement, including for transit riders who can't be at least six feet apart from each other.

"We need to do this countywide," she said Wednesday. "I would suggest we have supplies of masks" to give passengers on buses if they don't have face coverings of their own.

Homestead's city government has also only urged people to cover their faces at the store.

Herald staff writer Samantha J. Gross contributed to this report.

**Load-Date:** April 9, 2020

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*At Miami-Dade commission meeting, a different coronavirus crisis at every turn*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5YM4-VR11-JC3J-X1W3-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

April 7, 2020 Tuesday

Copyright 2020 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** coronavirus

**Length:** 1023 words

**Byline:**  Douglas Hanks

Miami Herald

**Body**

Miami-Dade commissioners convened electronically for the first time Tuesday, holding a remote meeting that served as a legislative tour of scattered corners of the county's coronavirus crisis.

Unemployed airport workers pleaded for help with health insurance, while their former employers warned of financial ruin without relief. South Dade nurseries said the national coronavirus ***shutdown*** landed in the middle of their prime spring growing season, adding a grim multiplier to every dollar lost.

The head of Jackson hospital's union protested planned furloughs in the middle of a health crisis, and the leader of Miami-Dade's domestic-violence board warned of a surge of incidents amid a shuttered economy, and a dwindling supply of shelter for victims. Crops left to die amid economic ruin were targeted for a massive county feeding operation in the works to sustain people through months of unemployment.

"We have to find a way to make sure the people being laid off have a way to live," Commissioner Barbara Jordan said on camera from her commission office, where she occasionally donned a surgical ***mask*** when staff were nearby.

This was the first commission meeting since Mayor Carlos Gimenez declared a local state of emergency over coronavirus on March 12. He issued 31 emergency decrees since, including amendments to prior orders and extensions of the original declaration. Miami-Dade's charter requires the mayor to present emergency orders to the commission as soon as possible, and on Tuesday the board voted unanimously to ratify all of Gimenez's directives.

"We are now in truly uncharted territory with ***COVID***-19," Gimenez said. "Developing these protocols was like taking off on the runway at full throttle, and we still haven't finished building the train."

A first for the Miami-Dade County Commission: remote meeting

The agenda was a mix of new items related to coronavirus and legislation left over from past meetings and committee hearings. But if some of the issues were familiar, the format had no precedent in Miami-Dade government. Members of the public submitted emails read by a clerk, and voicemails played aloud.

"I don't have money to pay for medicine," Maryln Boyeros, a laid-off airport worker from Miami Gardens, said in a voicemail message submitted as part of the public comment portion of a meeting that, for the first time, had no meeting site. "I don't have money to pay for rent."

jordan ***mask*** .jpgMiami-Dade commissioners held their first remote meeting on Tuesday, April 7, 2020, convening using video conferencing during the coronavirus crisis.

Boyeros said she lost her job after 15 years in the service sector at Miami International Airport. She spoke in favor of a union-backed effort to make MIA tenants pay healthcare benefits for laid-off workers in exchange for three months of rent relief worth about $65 million.

Commissioners passed the relief for airlines, shops, restaurants, rental-car companies and other MIA businesses, but the push for worker benefits was deferred to a later meeting after objections.

"How magically do you propose [businesses] like myself be able to contribute to paying health benefits when we have zero cash flow coming into my business today or for the foreseeable future," said Christopher Descalzo, a partner at Global Concessions, which operates Versailles and other restaurants and shops at MIA.

The commission also:

Approved temporarily waiving a rule preventing retired county employees from coming back at their former pay grades. Citing concerns about police, paramedics and firefighters being taken off duty from coronavirus exposure, commissioners approved allowing the former employees to come back at their prior pay scales. Heard from Miguel DeGrandy, chairman of the county's domestic violence oversight board. In an email, he said hotlines are already experiencing a significant increase in calls while shelters run out of space. With couples forced together in isolation at a time of surging unemployment and high anxiety, DeGrandy wrote, "the perfect storm is forming."Agreed to extend an existing moratorium on cutting off county water service. The passed resolution by Commissioner Joe Martinez directed the county's Water and Sewer Department not to end any service over late payments until 60 days after Gimenez lifts the current emergency declaration. Approved a resolution urging Congress to provide relief for farmers unable to sell their crops, and to approve more money to let those fruits and vegetables be used to feed the hungry. Gimenez agreed to consider a proposal by Commissioner ***Daniella Levine Cava*** to have the county purchase some crops to use as part of a planned "mass feeding" operation for the unemployed in the coming months. Received a report from Gimenez, who told commissioners he was not ready to match Miami Beach's emergency order requiring customers and employees to cover their faces while in grocery stores, pharmacies and other businesses allowed to remain open during the emergency. "There are some issues there that concern me," he said. "Our attorneys have some concerns about that face-***mask*** issue." Heard from Jackson union leader Martha Baker, who urged commissioners to oppose the announced furloughs at the tax-funded Jackson system of hospital employees not involved in critical care. While the hospital faces a financial crisis from a loss in surgical dollars and sales-tax subsidies, Baker called for Jackson to pause cost-cutting measures and instead train workers to help with a coming surge of ***COVID***-19 patients. "We need to take this time and prepare everyone for the biggest fight of our lives," she said.Approved a resolution urging Washington to ban flights from Cuba, which has already suspended U.S. flights. Commissioner Esteban "Steve" Bovo, who represents the Hialeah area, suggested the concentration of ***COVID***-19 cases in that part of the county came from Cuba travelers but offered no evidence. "We're seeing a spike in cases here in the north end of the county," he said. "But my concern, quite honestly, is that many of the cases that we have here could have been generated out of Cuba," he said.

**Load-Date:** April 8, 2020

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*"Why don't you have a mask?" Miami-Dade government carries on during coronavirus crisis*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5YJ0-GGD1-JC3J-X1T5-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

March 28, 2020 Saturday

Copyright 2020 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** coronavirus

**Length:** 1168 words

**Byline:**  Douglas Hanks

Miami Herald

**Body**

When Ashley Sanders started her round of visits to the elderly this week as a county home-care aide, she said she had four medical masks issued by Miami-Dade. They had to last the entire week.

Her schedule required 20 stops at homes of people in their 80s and 90s by Friday, and she didn't want to reuse masks. So Sanders said she ran out after one day, and had no choice but to make home visits with an uncovered face in the middle of the coronavirus pandemic.

"Today, my client asked: 'Why don't you have a ***mask***?' She's scared," Sanders, 33, said near the end of her workday on Friday. "It's definitely scary. ... We only get four masks for one week."

The largest local government in Florida faces its steepest challenge ever in trying to keep its workforce healthy as a virus sweeps through the Miami-Dade population and faces global competition for the supplies needed to protect workers. The head of social services said there should be plenty of masks for home-care workers next week thanks to a recent delivery.

Most county services remain available, even as Miami-Dade is losing workers to quarantine and facing daunting challenges in how employees do their work.

Late Tuesday, Miami-Dade shut down its entire permitting building and shifted paperwork online after multiple employees tested positive for ***COVID***-19. It also told the more than 400 county workers inside the building to self-isolate for 14 days.

The jarring news followed two days when the building was allowed to open and serve customers after an earlier ***COVID***-19 diagnosis there. The building at 11805 SW 26th St. in Kendall had closed for 48 hours for cleaning the prior week after one employee tested positive for the virus.

transit tweet

County Commissioner ***Daniella Levine Cava*** said she's been glad to see some departments shift office-bound employees to four-day work weeks, with 10-hour daily shifts. But she said more action is needed to send more county office workers home. "I am concerned," she said. "But I do believe they're pushing hard to take the proper precautions."

New ways to board the bus in Miami-Dade

At the start of the crisis, Miami-Dade's transit system was issuing a single Clorox wipe to bus drivers before shifts. Now that transit fares are suspended, buses have closed off their front doors to make passengers board from the back.

"The operators are scared," said Jeffery Mitchell, head of the county's transit union. "They're still getting one wipe and one pair of gloves. No masks."

Alice Bravo, head of transit for the county, said Miami-Dade has been able to increase the frequency of wiping down buses now that schedules are cut and ridership is down by more than 60 percent. She said agency employees whose age or medical conditions make them more at risk for ***COVID***-19 complications are being shifted away from driver roles to reduce risk, with some assigned to help with increased cleaning.

Transit, she said, remains in demand. "There are people who depend on the service," she said. "They're going to the doctor, they're going to the grocery store."

At Miami-Dade's housing agency, residents of a senior complex in Miami that includes the Robert King High towers were recently instructed to halt all visits from children after a resident tested positive for ***COVID***-19. A printed notice to residents also called for limited family visitation overall, and noted "staff is authorized to enforce these policies."

"We're doing what we're supposed to be doing," said Michael Liu, director of public housing for Miami-Dade. "We're cleaning our common areas and our elevators three or four times a day."

Miami-Dade's sanitation crews remain fully staffed

The county employees driving Miami-Dade sanitation trucks no longer use fingerprint scanners to clock in for a shift, and residents who pull up to county recycling centers are told to keep their windows up and display driver licenses through the glass. Michael Fernandez, director of the county's Solid Waste department, said so far the virus hasn't hit drivers, who typically work alone in trucks assigned to them.

"We are not experiencing anything out of the ordinary with drivers getting sick," he said. "We're staffing all our routes, and getting the garbage picked up."

Special baths to remove coronavirus for shelter dogs and cats

At the county animal shelter in Doral, workers are using a diluted hydrogen-peroxide bath for dogs and cats abandoned by owners suspected of ***COVID***-19 exposure. The animals are then quarantined for five days with no direct human contact, said Kathleen Labrada, an assistant director at Animal Services.

She said based on guidance from the University of Florida's veterinary school, dogs and cats don't transmit ***COVID***-19 but they can infect humans if the virus is on their fur or collars. "The dog you handle as a surface" and clean it, Labrada said.

So far, only three animals have sparked the ***COVID***-19 treatment at Animal Services, including a dog from a family who came back from New York where a relative had contracted the virus. "There wasn't good information about whether the dog had been exposed," she said. "So we treated that as an exposure."

Alex Muñoz, the agency's director, said Animal Services is bracing for a surge in people abandoning pets as unemployment sweeps through Miami-Dade and sickness spreads. He said the Animal Services staff's existing surgical supplies should last at least 30 days but that it's been a challenge to secure replacements.

"We are in the same struggle that the human healthcare providers are in terms of the supply of gowns and masks," Labrada said.

Supply shortages in home care

Supply shortages at the county's home-care division within the Department of Community Action and Human Services has the union representing those employees calling on Miami-Dade to take action.

Se'Adoreia "Cee Cee" Brown, a local AFSCME president in Miami-Dade, said the county should reduce home visits to the number of masks available to each staff member.

"They don't mind doing the work," during the pandemic, but supply shortages needed to be addressed, Brown said. "They're not only putting themselves at risk, but the clients they're seeing."

Lucia Davis-Raiford, director of the county's social services arm, Community Action and Human Services, said the last week was challenging on supplies but that a back order has arrived that should mean ample masks in the coming week for homecare aides as they clean for clients and help some in the bathroom. She said she didn't think masks were in such supply that only four would be issued to someone for an entire week.

"Thankfully, thankfully we have supplies," she said. "That work is up close and personal."

For Sanders, now in her seventh year providing home care, coronavirus has meant prowling Amazon for her own supply of masks and making do with goggles she purchased herself.

"I've got family who call and ask if I'm okay," said Sanders, a Coconut Grove resident who said she earns about $15 an hour. "Because they know what kind of work I do."

**Load-Date:** March 28, 2020

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*South Florida cities pressure counties to issue shelter-in-place orders amid COVID-19*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5YHC-7CX1-DYJM-M54P-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

March 25, 2020 Wednesday

Copyright 2020 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** coronavirus

**Length:** 940 words

**Byline:**  Aaron Leibowitz

Miami Herald

**Body**

City officials in both Miami-Dade County and Broward County are pressing county leaders to issue decrees telling people to stay home to slow the spread of the novel coronavirus.

Both counties have already taken steps to close non-essential businesses and to push for social distancing measures, and on Wednesday, Miami-Dade County Mayor Carlos Gimenez pleaded with residents to stay home in his latest video address. "I urge everyone to ***stay at home*** -- I repeat, ***stay at home*** -- unless you are performing an essential activity as outlined in my executive orders," he said.

But the counties have yet to put into law when residents can and can't leave their homes, leaving cities to draft their own emergency orders in recent days.

In Miami-Dade, a wave of municipalities, including Miami Beach and Miami, have come forward to either urge or order their residents to stay home, spelling out various exemptions, including ones for people who work "essential" jobs as defined by Gimenez.

And in Broward, city officials are pushing their county administrator to take the lead in South Florida and enact a countywide directive for residents to shelter in place.

The effort in Miami-Dade started Monday when a group of cities along the county's east coast, led by Miami Beach, enacted so-called "Safer at Home" measures modeled after an order last week by the city of Los Angeles. On Wednesday, Coral Gables, Doral, North Miami Beach and Pinecrest enacted similar measures.

Gimenez took a new step of his own Wednesday evening, issuing an emergency order urging people to stay home if they are over 65 or have health conditions that make them vulnerable to the effects of ***COVID***-19. It mirrored a similar directive from Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis from Tuesday urging people in that age group statewide to remain home.

Still, some municipal leaders are looking to the county to do more. In a letter to Gimenez on Wednesday, Cutler Bay Mayor Tim Meerbott argued that a countywide shelter-in-place order "is our best chance to flatten the curve and save as many lives as possible."

"Due to the risk of the rapid spread of the virus, and the need to protect the most vulnerable members of the community, this Order will assist in securing that all individuals anywhere in Miami-Dade County are to shelter in place -- that is, ***stay at home*** -- except for certain essential activities and work," Meerbott wrote.

cutler bay letter

Gimenez has argued against a countywide shelter-in-place order, saying in a memo Monday to County Commissioner ***Daniella Levine Cava*** -- who has also pressed him to issue such an order -- that although shelter in place "is the buzz phrase of the day, telling residents to do so could be confusing, especially to our seniors."

Miami-Dade Commissioner Esteban "Steve" Bovo, who represents the Hialeah area and is a 2020 candidate to succeed a term-limited Gimenez, said he agrees, calling the discussion "a lot of semantics."

"The cities are doing the same things we're doing," he said. "Now we're in this trap of: 'Oh, I said something stronger than you.' "

But some local leaders say the current situation, with a hodgepodge of municipal curfews and shelter-in-place directives from one city to the next, is too confusing and difficult to enforce.

Anthony DeFillipo, the mayor of North Miami Beach, said he's hoping Miami-Dade's League of Cities can soon convene a call with all 34 municipal mayors in the county to unify their message.

"We want to try to get together as 34 mayors and go to Mayor Gimenez and say, 'Look, all of us as mayors would like to adopt this same protocol,' " DeFillipo said. "We want the county to work in conjunction with us and be on the same page."

Similar tensions have bubbled up in Broward, where city managers from across the county spoke by phone Wednesday with county administrator Bertha Henry about their desire for the county to enact a shelter-in-place order, rather than having each city implement its own.

After the call, the city managers, acting as the Broward County City Managers Association, sent a letter to Henry saying they "implore" her to immediately issue a countywide "Safer at Home" order.

"The difference between flattening the curve and hospital overload depends on sheltering in place now," read the letter from Pompano Beach City Manager Greg Harrison, the president of the managers' group. "It is our greatest chance to have the least number of people infected and prevent stretching our public health resources way beyond their capacity."

In a separate document, the managers indicated that officials in at least 25 of 31 municipalities in the county would support the move.

"The general feeling among the municipalities is it's really not effective if you're just gonna do it municipality by municipality. You have to do it as a county," Joseph Napoli, the city manager for Cooper City in Broward, told the Miami Herald.

Napoli acknowledged that such an order might be hard to enforce, but he said it would make it easier to educate the public if the message is the same across municipalities.

"If it's countywide, it's much easier to educate people," he said.

But Broward has so far been reluctant to take that step. Napoli said county officials have indicated that they prefer to issue any shelter-in-place orders in conjunction with Miami-Dade County.

Broward similarly followed Miami-Dade's lead in ordering the closure of all "non-essential" businesses on Sunday after Miami-Dade had already done so last Thursday.

Henry and a county spokesperson did not immediately respond to a request for comment Wednesday evening.

Miami Herald staff writer Douglas Hanks contributed to this report.

**Load-Date:** March 26, 2020

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Miami-Dade mayor promises 'action' in enforcing coronavirus rules on businesses*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5YHC-7CX1-DYJM-M54W-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

March 25, 2020 Wednesday

Copyright 2020 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** coronavirus

**Length:** 748 words

**Byline:**  Douglas Hanks

Miami Herald

**Body**

Miami-Dade's mayor warned of stricter enforcement of coronavirus restrictions Wednesday as Marlins Park completed its first day of drive-thru testing for older residents.

With an economy largely paralyzed by measures to slow the pandemic in Miami-Dade, the transit system suffered significant losses. On Wednesday, Brightline announced it was temporarily suspending its rail service between Miami and West Palm Beach -- and laying off 250 workers -- and Miami Beach said a ***shutdown*** of its free trolley system would begin at 7 p.m. Thursday.

The idled trains and mini buses removed one more option available to residents already facing the forced ***shutdown*** of thousands of businesses across Miami-Dade. Carlos Gimenez, the county's mayor, said Wednesday police and code inspectors planned to step up enforcement of his emergency orders to close non-essential businesses and reduce crowding at establishments allowed to remain open.

"I've been hearing again and again we're still not having 100 percent compliance. So today becomes a day of action," Gimenez said in the latest video address that he's been using to communicate details about decrees the mayor has issued under emergency powers, including requirements for social distancing. "Six feet between people is not a suggestion. This is now the rule of law."

In an online town hall later in the afternoon, the county's police director said he's been pleased overall with how well businesses were adjusting to the string of emergency orders to regulate how many people can gather at their establishments.

"I'm pleasantly surprised that most businesses are complying," said director Freddie Ramirez, a Gimenez appointee under the authority of the mayor. "They're doing their best."

Speaking at an online town hall with Commissioner ***Daniella Levine Cava***, Ramirez said officers have mostly been warning businesses about rule violations and haven't charged anyone with violating emergency orders. There was no word on the results from Wednesday's announced effort to increase enforcement of social-distancing requirements and other aspects of the mayor's orders.

The warnings to obey coronavirus rules arrived as Florida neared its 2,000th case of ***COVID***-19, the disease caused by the virus. The state Department of Health reported 295 new cases Wednesday evening, bringing the total to 1,977. A death in North Florida's Clay County brought the total known fatalities to 23 statewide.

In Miami-Dade, the day brought 91 new cases, pushing the total to 491, the most of any Florida county. Broward saw 57 new cases, for a total of 412.

Miami-Dade County is building a 250-bed hospital at fairgrounds in WestchesterConstruction crews assemble a 250-bed field hospital at Miami-Dade's fairgrounds in Westchester, Florida on Tuesday, March 24, 2020. The hospital is being built in preparation for a surge of coronavirus cases.

Cases have increased as testing expanded across Florida. Marlins Park finished its first day offering drive-thru testing for older residents with an appointment. By 4:30 p.m., 165 cars snaked through the testing set up outside the county-owned ballpark, carrying 257 people who were tested with nasal swabs, said Juan Diasgranados, a county spokesman. Results won't be available for days.

Tests are reserved for people 65 or older with ***COVID***-19 symptoms, which include fever, cough and shortness of breath. People must call 305-499-8767 the day before to schedule a test, and Diasgranados said the roughly 300 appointments available for Thursday were booked within two hours of the hotline opening at 9 a.m.

"If you're still looking to come to get tested in Marlins Park, call first thing in the morning" for a Friday slot, Diasgranados said.

While the new testing site opened in Little Havana, construction crews at the Youth Fair In the Westchester area were building a second 250-bed field hospital. Ray Casas, a spokesman for the entity that runs the county fairgrounds, said work was underway on the second facility that would bring the total count to 500 by Sunday.

"And we've identified the location for a third if the need arises," Casas said. A county spokeswoman was not immediately available to confirm work on the second hospital, but Miami-Dade had requested from Florida construction of up to 2,000 field hospital beds.

A status report from the county's Emergency Operations Center on Tuesday night switched the expected capacity from 250 to 500. But Wednesday's report had the capacity back down to 250 beds.

**Load-Date:** March 26, 2020

**End of Document**

LexisNexis®

[*Miami mayor calls emergency meeting on possible stay-at-home order for city residents*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5YGY-Y951-DYJM-M1CP-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Miami Herald

March 23, 2020 Monday

Copyright 2020 The Miami Herald All Rights Reserved



**Section:** coronavirus

**Length:** 702 words

**Byline:**  Douglas Hanks

Miami Herald

**Body**

Miami Mayor Francis Suarez on Monday called for an emergency meeting this week to discuss what's needed for a mandatory "shelter-in-place" order and a ***curfew*** during the coronavirus emergency.

Such an order would impose new restrictions on people leaving their homes in a city of more than 400,000 people, where previous emergency orders have already closed parks and restaurants and shuttered countless businesses in an effort to slow the spread of ***COVID***-19 during a global pandemic.

If Miami followed the practice of California, Illinois, New York and other states, a shelter-in-place order would allow movement for a string of "essential" activities, including dog walking, grocery shopping and travel to work for vital businesses like grocery stores and hospitals.

Suarez called for the meeting to be held Wednesday at 8 p.m. using phone or video technology, with the five commissioners and the public participating remotely. Gov. Ron DeSantis issued an order last week suspending a state law requiring members of an elected body to convene at a single location.

Commissioner Alex Diaz de la Portilla said he tried to call a special meeting on his own last week. But when he failed to secure signatures from two other members on the five-member board, Diaz de la Portilla said Suarez accepted his request to use the mayor's authority to set a commission meeting and that's he's sponsoring the legislation required for a shelter-in-place decree.

"We should have done this last Friday," Diaz de la Portilla said of a shelter-in-place order. "People are playing basketball. They're not exercising personal responsibility."

Commissioner Ken Russell, who spent part of the weekend testing out technology for an unprecedented remote meeting, said the city probably isn't ready to reproduce the kind of Zoom-style video chat that would let the public participate in real time. Instead, a citizen wishing to speak would likely have to send in a recording during public comment or an email.

flechas tweet

"It doesn't look like we will have the bandwidth to have the public stream in and have their voice heard by the commission," Russell said.

The commissioner said he's not ready to commit to attending the meeting. Quorum rules are still in effect, meaning at least three of the five commissioners must participate. Russell said he needs assurances first that citizens can use the voicemail or email option to be heard. "We're close," he said.

The Suarez announcement states other coronavirus topics are on the proposed agenda, including meals for seniors, ***COVID***-19 testing at Marlins Park, and general briefing about the crisis. Suarez would need an opinion from city lawyers that Miami has emergency powers to confine residents to their homes.

If they find Suarez doesn't have that authority, commissioners could request a ***stay-at-home*** decree from Miami-Dade Mayor Carlos Gimenez or Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis. On Monday, county Commissioner ***Daniella Levine Cava***, a 2020 candidate for county mayor, released a letter calling on Gimenez to issue a shelter-in-place order for Miami-Dade's more than 2.7 million residents.

After a weekend where Gimenez issued a late-night order closing marinas to stop packed boat parties reported by the Miami Herald, Levine Cava said not enough people are heeding calls to ***stay at home*** and avoid gatherings.

"The headlines from this weekend reaffirm why we need to move swiftly because too many are not following the guidance from the CDC, state and local officials on social distancing," Levine Cava wrote.

At a press conference Monday, DeSantis continued to resist a statewide order, arguing the experience of other states shows they don't work because people won't comply.

"At the end of the day, you're going to have a group of people that are not going to comply, that are going to put themselves first," he said Monday. "I would just say for those folks, you need to cool it."

Lawrence Mower, a staff writer for the Times/Herald Tallahassee bureau, contributed to this report.

This report was updated to correct the rules required to hold a special city meeting called by Miami's mayor. He can call the meeting, but at least three commissioners must participate to conduct business.

**Load-Date:** March 24, 2020

**End of Document**