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DAILY SUN



WEDNESDAY
JULY 15,
2020

THE NEWSPAPER OF FLORIDA'S FRIENDLIEST HOMETOWN

NATIONAL NEWS



The Associated Press

SCHOOLS, PARENTS CONFRONT POLITICS OF REOPENING AMID VIRUS SURGE

Many parents, educators and doctors agree that the social and educational toll of a long school closure may outweigh the risk of coronavirus, even if they don't agree on how to reopen safely. The American Academy of Pediatrics has issued guidelines supporting in-person school. But it said science, not politics, must guide the decision where COVID-19 is spreading. **A3**

NATION & WORLD REPORT

Health: The first COVID-19 vaccine tested in the U.S. revved up people's immune systems just the way scientists had hoped, researchers reported — as the shots are poised to begin final testing. **A7**

Nation: Three civil rights lawsuits accuse Philadelphia of using military-level force that injured protesters and bystanders during peaceful protests against racial inequality and police brutality. **A8**



World News A2
Florida News A5
Lottery A4
Local News A24

Faces in The News Jeff Sessions



Former U.S. Attorney General lost the Republican nomination for his old Senate seat to former college football coach Tommy Tuberville.

National News, A9

Top of the News

INSIDE THE ISSUES SHAPING OUR COMMUNITY

Officials: Do Your Part To Reverse Virus Spread

LATEST NUMBERS

The Florida Department of Health reported 9,194 new cases of COVID-19 among Florida residents, according to data released Tuesday, increasing the total to 291,629. In the tri-county area, Sumter County reported 7 new cases, Lake County 134 and Marion County 131. The state also confirms a total since March of 18,881 hospitalizations and 4,409 deaths, including 18 in Sumter County, 27 in Lake County and 15 in Marion County.

QUESTIONS

Q How can I avoid getting or spreading the virus?

A Continue social distancing, frequent handwashing, wearing a mask and limiting exposures to crowds, especially indoors.

Q With numbers so high, should I get tested?

A Only if you have a serious reason to believe you're infected, said Dr. Jeff Lowenkron, chief medical officer of The Villages Health. Hospitals have limited rapid testing capabilities, and since labs are experiencing a large backlog, it's going to be 8-10 days before you get your results back — and that's almost the amount of time (14 days) you'd be instructed to self-quarantine with rest and fluids anyway. "A positive result won't help a patient with mild to moderate symptoms heal because there are no treatments for them," he said. "If you have enough concern to think you're positive, you should already be self-quarantining."

Please See **QUESTIONS, A26**

DeSantis says, 'We have to address virus with steady resolve' as he beefs up testing, medical support in hardest-hit areas.



Cindy Skop | Daily Sun

Registered nurse Ernesto Proteles, right, of Sarasota, screens for COVID-19 at Laurel Manor Recreation Center. As case numbers are rising in Florida, more people are receiving tests to try to control the spread.



Daily Sun staff and wire reports

Florida on Tuesday marked another grim milestone in the fight against the coronavirus, reporting 132 more deaths — its biggest single-day spike in fatalities and a 90% increase over the past two weeks. That brings the death toll of Floridians to 4,409 on a day the state also reported another 9,194 cases of COVID-19, the disease caused by the virus. As of noon Tuesday, 8,253 COVID-19 patients were hospitalized in Florida, according to the Florida Agency for Health Care Administration. That includes 24 at UF Health The Villages Hospital and 41 at UF Health Leesburg Hospital — a 22% increase in four days. Florida's rolling seven-day average deaths is now the nation's second-highest behind Texas. Twice as many people are dying here as two weeks ago, and nearly three times as many as a month ago. Doctors had predicted that a surge in deaths would follow Florida's jump in daily reported cases, from about 2,000 a day a month ago to the more than 9,000 now.

Please See **VIRUS, A26**

STOP THE SPREAD

Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.

Avoid close contact with people who are sick, even inside your home. Stay at least 6 feet from other people outside home.

Wear a cloth face cover when you have to go out in public — for example, to the grocery store or to pick up other necessities.

RESOURCES & REOPENING

Coronavirus: How America Is Moving To Keep Us Safe

New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo announced four more states are on New York, New Jersey and Connecticut's quarantine list on Tuesday as governors there sought to contain the spread of COVID-19 from regions of the country where infection rates are growing. The addition of Minnesota, New Mexico, Ohio and Wisconsin means that travelers from 22 states will be required to quarantine for 14 days upon entering New York. The list of states that meet the travel advisory's metrics has grown each week. Now, the quarantine requirements apply to over half of the nation's population. Last month, the governors of New York, New Jersey and Connecticut announced a joint travel advisory that applies to any person arriving from a state with a positive test rate higher than 10 per 100,000 residents over a seven-day rolling average or a state with a 10% or higher positive rate over a seven-day rolling average.

— Compiled from wire reports

HOW THINGS ARE CHANGING IN HAWAII

Hawaii Gov. David Ige says he will wait another month to waive a 14-day quarantine requirement for out-of-state travelers who test negative for COVID-19, citing an increasing number of cases locally, "uncontrolled" outbreaks in several U.S. mainland states and a shortage of testing supplies. The testing plan, as announced last month, was scheduled to take effect on Aug. 1. It's now postponed to Sept. 1. Many in Hawaii's business community had been looking forward to the plan.

HOW THINGS ARE CHANGING IN ILLINOIS

People traveling from Iowa and Oklahoma to Chicago will have to quarantine for two weeks upon arrival or face possible fines starting Friday. Chicago first issued a quarantine order early this month for 15 other states based on increasing numbers of confirmed cases of the coronavirus. The city updated the order Tuesday, bringing the total number of affected states to 17. To comply, travelers must stay at a single home or other dwelling for 14 days except to seek medical care or be tested for COVID-19.

LOVIN' THE LIFESTYLE

Behind the lens with a Daily Sun photojournalist. **D1**



FLORIDA COVID-19 CALL CENTER

The Florida Department of Health's COVID-19 call center is available 24/7 at **866-779-6121**. You can also email **COVID-19@flhealth.gov**

Health Departments

Sumter: 352-569-3102
Marion: 352-629-0137
Lake: 352-589-6424



from the front page

Temporary Hospitals Not An Answer in Virus Surge

By CHRISTINE SEXTON
News Service of Florida

TALLAHASSEE
As Florida hospitals face a surge in patients with COVID-19, they may not be able to rely on field hospitals to provide more space. And hurricanes are the reason.

Florida Division of Emergency Management communications director Jason Mahon told The News Service of Florida on Tuesday that the state is focusing efforts on expanding hospital surge capacity and not on creating alternate sites to accommodate any overflows of patients.

"Over the past several months, the state has worked continuously with local officials to monitor the need for resources to support area hospitals. At this time, mobile field hospitals consisting of tents may not be the best resource to deploy during hurricane season," Mahon said. "Instead, our primary support strategy is to surge staff into existing facilities — opening up additional capacity in those hospitals."

While the Division of Emergency Management all but ruled out using alternate sites to treat patients, state Surgeon General Scott Rivkees on Tuesday twice avoided discussing whether Florida would turn to field hospitals as the number of people infected with COVID-19 continues to increase.

Florida reported 9,194 additional COVID-19 cases Tuesday, bringing the total number of cases in the state to 291,629. Nationwide, the total was 3,355,457.

Statewide, 21% of Florida's hospital beds were empty Tuesday.

VIRUS

Continued from A1

While the number of cases in Florida has climbed dramatically in the last month, deaths had remained steady, with about 200 to 250 recorded each week. That changed last week when the state reported 511 deaths, by far the most in a single week since the pandemic began.

The growing caseload is partly driven by increased testing, but a larger percentage of tests are coming back positive — surging from 6% a month ago to 18.8% on Tuesday.

That ties Florida with Mississippi for the second-worst positivity rate in the nation, behind Arizona's 26.4%.

The World Health Organization has said the goal to reduce spread should be of 5% or lower, a threshold only 19 states met Tuesday.

The median age of infections in Florida also rose from 36 last week to 41 — the highest age the state has reported since it started publicly releasing the statistic in mid-June.

Gov. Ron DeSantis has beefed up testing and medical support in the state's hardest-hit county, Miami-Dade, where 1 in 3 tests are now positive.

"We have all guns blazing here," he said during a news conference in Miami on Monday. "We're gonna continue to be providing support statewide, but particularly here in South Florida, where we see the epidemic is the most significant."

Hundreds of medical professionals have been sickened with the virus there, and at least 200 patients are hospitalized on ventilators.

"Every health care worker is working nonstop," added Lilian Abbo, a University of Miami Health System infectious disease physician. "Miami is now the epicenter of the pandemic. What we were seeing in Wuhan months ago, we are there now."

DeSantis said the state is sending 100 medical personnel to Miami and another 100 to the Tampa area. Another 2,000 health care workers are being sent to long-term care facilities around Florida.



Even with the testing increasing or being flat, the number of people testing positive is accelerating faster than that."

GOV. RON DESANTIS



"Even with the testing increasing or being flat, the number of people testing positive is accelerating faster than that," DeSantis said during a briefing at the state Capitol last week. "You know that's evidence that there's transmission within these communities."

He said on Monday that, although Florida is testing more people, the results are taking seven days or longer as labs struggle to keep up with the number of samples coming in.

"You have probably 700,000-plus tests a day that are being processed, mostly by commercial labs," he said. "They are backed up. Obviously, we want to improve that."

He said the state would add dedicated "symptomatic" lanes for potentially infected residents in Orange County and South Florida to get more rapid tests.

He also noted that treatments have improved and that the state has much more emergency hospital capacity than it had at the beginning of the pandemic.

"We have to address the virus with steady resolve. We can't get swept away in fear," he said. "We have to understand what is going on, understand that we have a long road ahead."

QUESTIONS

Continued from A1

What about medications being used on hospitalized patients?

There are some treatments that may help severely ill patients, but those are reserved for a hospital setting, not prevention or home use, Lowenkron said. If you do experience severe symptoms like respiratory distress, be sure to go to the emergency room.

If I really want a test, where can I go?

Most health providers are only testing people with symptoms (fever or chills, cough, sore throat, difficulty breathing, fatigue, body aches, loss of taste or smell, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting or diarrhea). But some health departments will test anyone. "The challenge for folks who are asymptomatic is you may have a long wait to get a test in the first place," Lowenkron said. "Then you may have a long wait to find out if your tests are positive or not -- long enough that it may not really help you that much."

How can a person test negative one day and be positive the next?

There are several ways a person can test negative if truly positive, Lowenkron explained, especially if the tests occurred on different days. Testing reliability depends on the amount of virus shed, the sample collected and the performance of the test being used. "The other piece is there might be exposure without any viral replication in the person until the virus takes hold," Lowenkron said. "Once that happens,

then the ability to shed virus exists, and at that point they can test positive, whereas before they tested negative." About half of people who contract the virus test positive within five days, and 98% will test positive by 11 days. "That's for those who actually contract it, not for those who were exposed," Lowenkron said.

When do you expect to see the peak finally happen?

It's too soon to tell, Lowenkron said. Test result delays mean that cases reported today were likely taken a week ago from people who have had the virus for up to two weeks. Current numbers still aren't reflecting Fourth of July activity, he said. "If we start to do (better behavioral) things today, we probably will see a reduction in trends in about two weeks," Lowenkron said.

How at risk are citizens in nursing homes/assisted living facilities?

"I think we've done a better job than some, but it's a challenge because people still need to come into work," Lowenkron said. That makes it impossible

to eliminate risk entirely, but he said these communities have reduced it with measures such as restricting visitors and requiring regular re-testing of staff and residents.

What about antibody testing?

The benefits are up in the air, Lowenkron said. Many companies are trying to sell antibody tests, but not all of them have approval from the Food and Drug Administration. "The antibodies really, in theory, should tell you you've been exposed, but they're not perfect."

Lowenkron said. "They don't know what the false positive rate is on those, and having antibodies doesn't mean you're immune." There is some support that transfusing plasma from other recovered patients to infected patients may help their recovery, so antibody testing helps identify those potential plasma donors. "That has some use, but for the individual getting antibody testing there's not much utility to it — not today," Lowenkron said.

— Ciara Varone, Daily Sun

TQ Nguyen, DMD
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