



# Joint Information Center on COVID-19 for the State of Florida

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE June 26, 2020**

**Contact: Joint Information Center on COVID-19 for the State of Florida (850) 815-4940, [ESF14@em.myflorida.com](mailto:ESF14@em.myflorida.com)**

## **The State of Florida Issues COVID-19 Updates**

**TALLAHASSEE, Fla.** – The State of Florida is responding to COVID-19. As of Friday, June 5 the state has moved into Phase 2 of Florida’s reopening plan. The Florida Department of Health will now issue this update once per week. However, DOH will continue to update the COVID-19 dashboard and post the state report daily.

Governor Ron DeSantis is in constant communication with Florida Division of Emergency Management Director Jared Moskowitz and State Surgeon General Dr. Scott Rivkees as the State of Florida continues to monitor and respond to the threat of COVID-19.

### **Recent actions the state has taken to respond to COVID-19:**

This week, Governor Ron DeSantis announced that the state will begin testing long-term care facility staff every two weeks starting Friday, June 26. This testing effort will assist in preventing the further spread of COVID-19 to vulnerable populations.

Governor DeSantis announced \$250 million in CARES Act funding for rental and mortgage assistance for Florida families that have been negatively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. More information is available [here \[lnks.gd\]](#).

Governor DeSantis extended [Executive Order 20-69 \[lnks.gd\]](#), regarding local government public meetings until 12:01 a.m. on August 1, 2020. A copy of Executive Order 20-150 is available [here. \[lnks.gd\]](#)

### **Additional actions the state has taken to respond to COVID-19:**

- DBPR issued Emergency Order [2020-09 \[lnks.gd\]](#), effective June 26, 2020, that suspends the sale of alcoholic beverages for consumption on the premises for all vendors licensed for such sale who derive more than 50 percent of gross revenue from the sale of alcoholic beverages. Such vendors may continue to sell alcoholic beverages in sealed containers for consumption off the premises in accordance with Executive Order 20-71, Sections 1 and 2.

- This week, the Florida Department of Health (DOH) issued a [Public Health Advisory \[lnks.gd\]](#) recommending the following:
  - All individuals in Florida should wear face coverings in any setting where social distancing is not possible,
  - All individuals over the age of 65 and all individuals of any age with high-risk health conditions should limit personal interactions outside of the home,
  - All individuals should refrain from participation in social or recreational gatherings of more than 50 people.
- To date, the Florida Division of Emergency Management (FDEM) has paid out \$27,990,526 in CARES Act disbursements to 11 counties. More information about CARES Act funding is available [here \[lnks.gd\]](#).
- FDEM is hosting a Mental Health Self-Care Webinar for emergency responders Sunday, June 28 from 11 a.m. – noon. The webinar is free and hosted in partnership with IsraAID. Individuals can register [here. \[lnks.gd\]](#)
- To date, the Division has sent the following PPE to support health care workers and first responders:
  - More than 40 million masks
  - More than 12.2 million gloves
  - More than 1.7 million face shields
  - More than 1.1 million shoe covers
  - More than 2 million gowns
  - More than 94 thousand goggles
  - Nearly 62 thousand coveralls
- To date, the Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA) has made more than 2,000 onsite visits to facilities and more than 27,000 telephone calls to residential providers statewide to provide support and determine emergent needs of facilities.
- This week, Florida Education Commissioner Corcoran advised school district superintendents and charter school administrators that he will consider requests to allow educators who are teaching subjects other than ESOL or Reading to continue in an out-of-field assignment during the 2020-21 school year.
- The Florida Department of Elder Affairs (DOEA) Restaurant Meal Initiative has served and delivered over 968,000 meals to elders throughout the state.
- DOEA worked with the United States Food and Drug Administration to extend national food waivers for the Adult Care Food Program and allow meal-time flexibilities to extend through August 31.
- DOEA participated in the Administration for Community Living national COVID-19 conference call with directors from all 50 State Units on Aging and a Region IV COVID-19 consultation roundtable call with representatives from Alabama, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina and Tennessee.
- DOEA hosted a webinar with Memory Disorder Clinics throughout Florida to discuss the important work being done during the COVID-19 response, including the distribution of 2,000 Scent Evidence Preservation Kits to help locate missing persons and return them to safety if they go wandering.
- Since March 1, 2020, Floridians have conducted over 1.6 million motor vehicle and credential transactions virtually through the department's online services [webpage](#)

[\[lnks.gd\]](#). FLHSMV encourages Floridians who can, to complete their driver license or motor vehicle transactions online, rather than in person at a driver license office.

- OIR issued Informational Memorandum [OIR-20-07M \[lnks.gd\]](#) providing guidance to insurers on hurricane season preparedness and response. Insurers are advised to review and consider operational guidance from the Federal Emergency Management Agency and encouraged to leverage technology to protect and best serve policyholders.
- Approximately 1,488 Florida National Guardsmen (FLNG) are mobilized to support Florida's response to COVID-19.
- FLNG has expanded its support to mobile testing teams and the community-based and walk-up test sites. To date, the FLNG has assisted in the testing of more than 498,693 individuals for the COVID-19 virus.
- The Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD) received eight pallets of cloth masks from the State Emergency Operations Center and will be distributing the masks to APD customers in supported living, group home residents and employees and to other providers to protect APD customers.
- FDOT continues to lead the coordination of DOH and the Florida Highway Patrol to implement Executive Order 20-86 at the I-95 checkpoint. To date, more than 41,100 traveler forms have been collected at the I-95 checkpoint.

## FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

- This week, the Florida Department of Health (DOH) issued a [Public Health Advisory \[lnks.gd\]](#) recommending the following:
  - All individuals in Florida should wear face coverings in any setting where social distancing is not possible,
  - All individuals over the age of 65 and all individuals of any age with high-risk health conditions should limit personal interactions outside of the home,
  - All individuals should refrain from participation in social or recreational gatherings of more than 50 people.
- To date, DOH has reported more than 1,600 contact tracers who are assisting with COVID-19 efforts across the state.
- DOH announced that the list of long-term care facilities in Florida associated with COVID-19 cases will now include active cases in each facility in order to provide real-time data. The list of long-term care facilities with active COVID-19 cases is available [here](#).
- DOH is providing a report detailing surveillance data for every Florida county. Previously, this information was only available for select communities. The surveillance data report is available [here](#).
- At the direction of Governor DeSantis, State Surgeon General Dr. Scott Rivkees declared a Public Health Emergency for COVID-19 in Florida.
- DOH established a public call center for questions regarding COVID-19. The call center launched Monday, March 2, and is open 24/7.
- In an effort to increase testing, Governor DeSantis has directed Surgeon General Dr. Scott Rivkees on an emergency temporary basis to allow licensed pharmacists in Florida to order and administer COVID-19 tests.
- DOH is working with Florida's Board of Pharmacy and Florida's Department of Business and Professional Regulation on mobile pharmacy compliance guidance.

- More information on DOH's COVID-19 response is available [here. \[lnks.gd\]](#)

## FLORIDA DIVISION OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

- To date, the Florida Division of Emergency Management (FDEM) has paid out \$27,990,526 in CARES Act disbursements to 11 counties. More information about CARES Act funding is available [here \[lnks.gd\]](#).
- FDEM is hosting a Mental Health Self-Care Webinar for emergency responders Sunday, June 28 from 11 a.m. – noon. The webinar is free and hosted in partnership with IsraAID. Individuals can register [here. \[lnks.gd\]](#)
- To date, the Division has sent the following PPE to support health care workers and first responders:
  - More than 40 million masks
  - More than 12.2 million gloves
  - More than 1.7 million face shields
  - More than 1.1 million shoe covers
  - More than 2 million gowns
  - More than 94 thousand goggles
  - Nearly 62 thousand coveralls
- For long-term care facilities alone, the Division has sent:
  - More than 10 million masks
  - 1 million gloves
  - More than 500,000 face shields
  - More than 900,000 gowns
- FDEM announced a partnership with Home Depot, Publix and Quest Diagnostics to create six additional testing sites. Locations are available [here \[lnks.gd\]](#).
- Five state-supported drive-thru testing sites located in Palm Beach, Miami-Dade, Orange and Duval counties are offering free antibody testing to anyone over the age of 18. The sites offering antibody tests are available [here \[lnks.gd\]](#).
- At the direction of Governor DeSantis, the state has established 15 drive-thru and 15 walk-up testing sites across the state, with more coming online. More than 345,000 people have been tested at these sites. Floridians can find a site near them [here.](#)
- The Florida Division of Emergency Management has launched a website to track the mobile lab that is testing long-term care facilities across the state. The website is available [here.](#)
- Find more information on DEM's response to COVID-19 [here.](#)

## FLORIDA AGENCY FOR HEALTH CARE ADMINISTRATION

- To date, the Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA) has made more than 2,000 onsite visits to facilities and more than 27,000 telephone calls to residential providers statewide to provide support and determine emergent needs of facilities.
- On June 16, AHCA issued [Emergency Rule 59AER20-4 \[lnks.gd\]](#) and [Emergency Rule 59AER20-5 \[lnks.gd\]](#). These rules require nursing home and assisted living facility staff to be tested for COVID-19 every two weeks with testing resources provided by the state and to submit test results to their employer/facility.

- AHCA issued [Emergency Order NO. 20-003](#) providing financial relief to nursing homes and Intermediate Care Facilities during the state's public health emergency. The emergency order extends the deadlines for March and April 2020 Quality Assessment payments until June 15, 2020 for Intermediate Care Facilities, and June 20, 2020 for nursing homes.
- AHCA issued [Emergency Rule 59AER20-2](#) and [Emergency Rule 59AER20-3](#). These rules require nursing homes and assisted living facilities to grant access to the Florida Department of Health or their authorized representative for the purpose infection prevention and control, including mandated COVID-19 testing of both on-duty and off-duty staff when arranged by the Department.
- At the direction of Governor DeSantis, AHCA issued [Emergency Rule 59AER20-1](#) requiring hospitals to test all patients for COVID-19, regardless of symptoms, prior to discharge to long-term care facilities.
- AHCA sent out an email to nursing homes requiring the transfer of residents with verified or suspected cases if they cannot be appropriately isolated and adhere to the CDC recommendations for COVID-19 response.
- AHCA issued a provider alert announcing additional flexibilities within the Medicaid program made at the direction of Governor DeSantis. Authorization requirements and services limits for medically necessary behavioral health care for are now waived.
- AHCA created a new temporary Personal Care Attendant program to help long-term care facilities fill staffing shortages. The program provides an 8-hour training on assisting with direct care so that personal care attendants can temporarily perform additional duties.
- AHCA has been working with the Department of Children and Families (DCF) to ensure current Medicaid recipients maintain benefits during the state of emergency. Medicaid application deadlines have also been extended.
- Find more information on AHCA's response to COVID-19 [here](#).

## FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONAL REGULATION

- DBPR issued Emergency Order [2020-09 \[lnks.gd\]](#), effective June 26, 2020, that suspends the sale of alcoholic beverages for consumption on the premises for all vendors licensed for such sale who derive more than 50 percent of gross revenue from the sale of alcoholic beverages. Such vendors may continue to sell alcoholic beverages in sealed containers for consumption off the premises in accordance with Executive Order 20-71, Sections 1 and 2.
- The Florida Department of Business and Professional Regulation (DBPR) issued [Emergency Order 2020-08 \[lnks.gd\]](#) which extends the deadlines for examination eligibility and licensure eligibility through December 31, 2020, for professional licenses regulated pursuant to Chapter 455, Florida Statutes, and the related professional practice acts. The Order supersedes section 4 of DBPR Emergency Order 2020-03, which had previously extended these deadlines through May 31, 2020.
- DPBR has distributed [Additional Information for Barbershops and Cosmetology Salons Pursuant to Executive Order 20-120](#) and [FAQs for Executive Order 20-120 – Expanding Phase 1: Safe. Smart. Step-by-Step. Plan for Florida's Recovery](#) to provide additional information and guidelines for barbershops, cosmetology salons, and cosmetology specialty salons.
- Find more information on DBPR's response to COVID-19 [here](#).

## FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

- Governor DeSantis announced federal approval for the implementation of Florida's Pandemic EBT (P-EBT) program, which will automatically issue benefits during the month of June to more than 2.1 million children who have temporarily lost access to free and reduced-price school meals during COVID-19-related school closures.
- As part of her *Hope for Healing Florida* initiative, First Lady Casey DeSantis recently announced that the Department of Children and Families (DCF) will be receiving a \$1.9 million emergency grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, which will provide crisis counseling and other mental health support for Floridians impacted by COVID-19.
- Per DCF's request, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) approved Florida's waiver to permit the state to launch a pilot project that allows families to purchase groceries online with their Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) card beginning April 21, 2020.
- DCF worked with the Florida Department of Health (DOH) to develop precautionary protocols for child welfare professionals and adult protective investigators who may have to make in-person visits to ensure the safety of those vulnerable populations.
- Find more information on DCF's response to COVID-19 [here](#).

## FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

- The Florida Department of Corrections (FDC) has resumed modified volunteer activities at select institutions.
- FDC has distributed cloth face coverings to all correctional officers and inmates at correctional institutions statewide.
- FDC is closely aligned with the [CDC Interim Guidance on Management of COVID-19 in Correctional and Detention Facilities](#).
- New inmate commitments from county jails undergo additional screening and 14-day quarantine before placement within the general population.
- FDC has suspended visitation at all correctional institutions statewide.
- Find more information on FDC's response to COVID-19 [here](#).

## FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

- Governor Ron DeSantis has directed the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO) to continue waiving the work search and work registration requirements for claimants through July 4, 2020. Additionally, the waiting week requirement will continue to be waived through August 1, 2020.
- To comply with federal law, effective May 10, 2020, claimants for all Reemployment Assistance programs, including state Reemployment Assistance, Pandemic Unemployment Assistance and Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation, will be required to return to the CONNECT system every two weeks to request their benefits or "claim their weeks." In doing so, claimants will confirm that they are still unemployed and acknowledge that they are able and available for work should it be offered. For more information, click [here \[lnks.gd\]](#). If claimants, currently receiving Reemployment Assistance benefits, no

longer wish to receive benefits, they do not need to claim their weeks, as payments will stop processing if weeks stop being claimed.

- DEO, in partnership with the Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles, launched a website to verify the identity of claimants who have been locked out of their CONNECT account, the online system for processing Reemployment Assistance claims. Individuals who were locked out of their CONNECT account have been notified and provided a direct link to verify their information so they can access their account.
- DEO is administering the Federal Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation program. The program is offered by the federal CARES Act and provides up to 13 weeks of benefits to a claimant who has exhausted Reemployment Assistance. For more information, please click [here \[lnks.gd\]](#).
- The Federal Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) program that provides unemployment benefits to those that may not otherwise be eligible under Florida's state Reemployment Assistance program is available. Eligibility includes independent contractors, gig workers and individuals who are self-employed. Working Floridians who have been impacted by COVID-19 and believe they may be eligible for Pandemic Unemployment Assistance, can visit [org](#) and select "File a Claim" to apply and be considered for PUA. Individuals may also call 1-833-FL-Apply (1-833-352-7759) for any questions they may have.
- DEO continues to provide updates on the efforts made to address the challenges to Florida's Reemployment Assistance program in response to COVID-19. This includes the [State Reemployment Assistance Claims Dashboard](#) that is updated daily to reflect the total number of Reemployment Assistance Claims submitted, verified, processed and paid.
- DEO announced more than 1,000 small businesses have been awarded more than \$49 million from the [Florida Small Emergency Bridge Loan program](#).
- The Business Damage Assessment survey is activated and continues to accept surveys to assess the impact of COVID-19 on Florida's local business operations and determine the appropriate actions for recovery. Click

--

---

Under Florida law, e-mail addresses are public records. If you do not want your e-mail address released in response to a public records request, do not send electronic mail to this entity. Instead, contact this office by phone or in writing.