

From the desk of Commissioner Weinroth

Grappling with the long-term impacts of the pandemic will require a collaborative effort between government, business and each of us.

With the recent increase in the percentage of positive tests in Palm Beach County, it is important for everyone to remain vigilant!

Facial coverings are mandatory in indoor public places and also outdoors when you are unable to social distance. Please comply with this directive to protect against inadvertent transmission of the virus.

The county is also in the process of mailing all residents a package with four (two pleated and two cloth) masks plus safety information.

Contact tracing is a vital tool being used to slow the spread of the virus. Please answer any calls identified as FL DEPT OF HEALTH and/or FL HEALTH DEPT. These are legitimate contact tracers calling to alert you of a potential virus exposure.

A "Combat COVID" app will be launched soon and will users if they come in close proximity to another app user who has tested positive. Once the app is available, the county initiate a public information campaign to announce its availability.

Additionally, there is a critical need for convalescent plasma. People who have recovered from COVID-19 have antibodies to attack the virus in their plasma that can help patients still fighting the coronavirus. To donate, check with your local hospital such as Baptist Health (786)-467-5400) and/or OneBlood (407-858-4939).

The county remains under Phase One openings. For example, restaurants and retail locations are only permitted to operate at 50% occupancy. The county is also restricted the hours of operations requiring restaurants to close from 11:00 pm to 5:00 am. This also applies to banquet halls, kratom and kava lounges, and amusement parks.

As a reminder, the following businesses are not currently allowed open under Phase One: bars; nightclubs, adult entertainment establishments, strip clubs; hookah, cigar, and other smoking bars and lounges; tanning salons, bowling alleys;

arcades; playhouses; concert houses; movie theaters; auditoriums; indoor entertainment venues, tattoo parlors, body piercing parlors, acupuncture venues, and massage parlors.

The COVID Education and Compliance Team (CECT), which conducts unannounced visits to businesses that may not be following mask and social distancing rules, has been very effective. To date, over 3,300 citizen complaints have been received.

To report a noncompliance issue concerning COVID-19 business operations or other complaints, please call 561.242.6843 or email covidcompliance@pbcgov.org.

If you have questions about the Palm Beach County School District reopening plan or would like to share a comment, please contact School District board members via email directly at boardoffice@palmbeachschools.org. The Board of County Commissioners does not have jurisdiction over school operations.

Census Reminder

The census is more than just a head count. It provides a snapshot in time (April 1st) of our country's population and is a determinant of how legislative seats (federal, state and local) are apportioned.

The self-response rate for Palm Beach County is currently less than 60 percent. In other words, with an estimated 1.5 million residents living in our county, 600,000 residents have yet to be counted. In the coming months, enumerators will be dispatched to find many of those who haven't responded.

The future distribution of federal and state dollars will be directly tied to the census figures. An undercount will skew data used to determine how our state allocates representation in the legislature and local governmental bodies and will, likewise, impact how billions of dollars a year are allocated for schools, hospitals, and pandemic relief and infrastructure projects.

If you are one of the 600,000 residents yet to respond to the US Census, now is the time to be counted.

- Respond online at: www.2020USCensus.gov.
- To respond by phone, call 800.330.2020.

- To respond by mail, locate the census questionnaire sent to your home. (In mid-April, the Census Bureau began mailing paper questionnaires to homes that had not responded online or by phone).

Please, help shape our future – each of us counts!

For more details on the COVID-19 and other county programs, please visit **discover.pbcgov.org**.

If you need any assistance, please contact our office at 561-276-1220 and/or email me at rweinroth@pbcgov.org. Stay safe and healthy.