

From the desk of Commissioner Weinroth

Holocaust survivors are treasures and with help from the Governor's office, we were able to provide them with access to receiving the COVID-19 vaccine. I was honored to play a role in facilitating this initiative.

I am also pleased to report our teachers, age 65 and over, have been offered vaccinations in a closed POD to facilitate increased opportunities for in-classroom instruction.

Overall, we are doing a good job with vaccine rollout in our community. Despite the issues of the limited supply, we are leveraging the resources of the state Department of Health, the Health Care District of Palm Beach County, Publix, CVS, Walmart, Sam's Club and Winn-Dixie to make the vaccine available to our residents.

The county is among the top counties in Florida vaccinating its residents. Once the supply increases, the county in conjunction with the state and federal government will have the infrastructure in place for mass vaccination sites of up to 7,000 people a day.

That is not to say we don't still have challenges. There are pockets of residents who cannot gain access to the reservation systems. I have asked the state to establish a better system targeting our most vulnerable residents who are feeling left out because they have limited computer access and skills.

Also, law enforcement officers and teachers who are over the age of 50 can get vaccinated at four federal sites around the state. The closest site to Palm Beach County is at Miami Dade Community College (North Campus), 11380 NW 27th Ave. in Miami.

The sooner we can get our seniors and health care workers vaccinated, the sooner the Governor can expand the criteria for others to receive the vaccine.

In the interim, we must remain vigilant and continue to mitigate the spread of the virus within our community.

- *Avoid the three Cs: crowded places, close-contact settings and confined/enclosed places*
- *Continue frequent handwashing*
- *Continue to wear facial coverings where social distancing is not possible*

New Vaccine Sites

The Health Care District of Palm Beach County opened a new vaccination site at the South Florida Fairgrounds on Feb. 10. With sufficient supplies, the site has the capacity to inoculate 7,000 people a day.

A vaccine site for north county opened Feb. 24 at the Burns Road Community Center in Palm Beach Gardens.

Like the South County Civic Center site in Delray Beach, appointments are required (no walk-ups permitted).

Each site is operating by the Health Care District with help from local fire rescue personnel. For more information, visit their website at www.hcdpbc.org or call 561-804-4155 and/or 866-201-6754.

PBIA Testing Site Opening

A private COVID-19 testing facility at Palm Beach International Airport was given the green light by the Board of County Commissioners. Helix Virtual Inc. will operate the site and offer tests for **ticketed passengers and airport/airline employees**. A fee for service will be collected and the facility is **not** open to the general public.

Vaccine Volunteers Needed

The United Way of Palm Beach County is recruiting general support volunteers at the vaccine distribution centers.

Volunteers could be asked to help with a variety of tasks such as cleaning clip boards and pens, moving chairs to support the elderly, directing crowd control and coordinating patient flow to ensure social distancing.

Medical credentials are not needed and vaccinations are not available for volunteers at this time. Interested volunteers should email Meghan Foley, associate director of Disaster Recovery, at MeghanFoley@unitedwaypbc.org.

Boca Raton Road Improvements

I am pleased to report that the Board of County Commissioners approved a \$4.3 million contract for improvements on Palmetto Park Road in Boca Raton from SW 7th Avenue to SW 5th Avenue. Work will include replacing the bridge, widening the roadway, adding sidewalk and installing new drainage. Watch for details on road closures related to construction.

Brightline in Boca

The pandemic may have forced Brightline to suspend the operation of its trains, but the rail line is steaming ahead with plans to build its station in Boca Raton.

Construction on the first phase of the city's \$46 million Brightline station, on the east side of the city's downtown library, is scheduled to start in March. Initial work will include a temporary parking lot and a relocated community garden.

The new station is scheduled to open in late 2022.