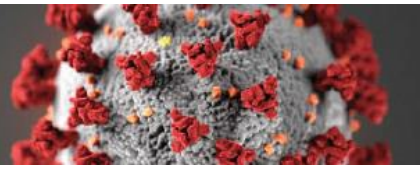




CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE UPDATE ON CORONAVIRUS



Mayor Dean J. Trantalis Announces Additional Proactive Measures to Respond to Coronavirus March 17, 2020 – 4:00 p.m.

With the number of cases of COVID-19 continuing to rise rapidly across the state of Florida, the city of Fort Lauderdale has decided today to take additional emergency measures to attempt to stem the spread of this dreadful disease.

Earlier today, Gov. DeSantis ordered all bars and nightclubs in the state to close for the next 30 days beginning at 5 p.m. I would like to thank the governor for the strong and firm leadership that he has shown Floridians throughout this crisis and for his continuing cooperation with our city.

The actions being taken today show how rapidly evolving this situation has become. Over the weekend, our city believed we were taking bold action with setting major social-distancing rules and capacity limits on such establishments. Now, there is the clear need to go further.

Gov. DeSantis left it to each community to decide how to handle the continued operation of restaurants. Under my emergency authority, we are ordering all restaurants in the city to shut down immediately and remain closed for the next 30 days.

I recognize the hardship that this could place on many and the pressure it places on our grocery stores to remain stocked with sufficient amounts of food product. In that light, we are allowing restaurants to continue to offer take-out, drive-thru, pick-up and delivery services. These services may be offered 24/7. I'm told that some establishments are already planning to shift dining room employees over to those areas so we can minimize the impact on our service industry personnel.

Also, we are ordering the closure of other major gathering spots in our community. Gyms, theaters, bowling alleys, dance halls, video arcades and other similar places will close for the next 30 days. This also includes entertainment facilities within hotels. Public gatherings of groups of more than 10 people are prohibited.

Critical businesses will not be affected by this order. These include grocery stores, pharmacies, gas stations, banks, doctor offices, convenience stores, medical supply stores, hardware stores and automotive repair stores. Social distancing should be exercised at these facilities.

The operations of our city government will also be curtailed so we can focus our attention on what will be a growing burden shouldered by our police and fire-rescue personnel.

This is a time for shared sacrifice as our nation faces one of its greatest crises — a virus that spreads with ease for which there is no standard cure or treatment. I cannot overstate the threat that COVID-19 poses to our community. Developments today illustrate just how dangerous and deadly this virus can be.

It is with a heavy heart that I must report that three elderly residents at assisted living facilities in our city have died. Test results have confirmed one was infected with COVID-19, and we await the results of the other tests.

The city is working closely with state and federal agencies to bring the necessary resources to bear and provide all the health care assistance possible. We are relying on the state Department of Health to conduct appropriate testing of other potentially impacted residents.

Our concern goes further than the residents and staff of these facilities. Fort Lauderdale police and fire-rescue personnel assisted with the victims. Several are self-quarantined at this time.

I would like to thank our residents and visitors for following the emergency rules to this point. None of this is easy, but our actions are vital to addressing this global health crisis.

Closing the public beaches was without precedent for this city, but necessary and people have adjusted accordingly. I'd also like to thank our business community. COVID-19 has struck us at our busiest time of the year and will hurt many of our small businesses. I am determined to work with officials at the federal, state and regional level to find ways we can assist in their support and recovery.

In closing, I urge everyone to follow the prudent and reasoned guidelines being recommended by health professionals.

If you feel sick, stay home. If your children are sick, keep them home. If someone in your household tests positive, keep the entire household home.

If you are an older person, try to limit your trips outside the home and your contact with other people. You are most at risk, and you cannot tell who may or may not be a carrier. People with compromised immune systems should follow the same advice.

Even healthy people should take precautions. We are all at risk. Do your part not to become infected and become a carrier of the virus. Work from home if possible and avoid public gatherings of more than 10 people. Keep travel and shopping to a minimum.

And for everyone, please practice good hygiene.

We will overcome this challenge. Our community ... and our nation ... are strong and resilient. Let's all do our part in this effort to stamp out this virus in the coming days and weeks.