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UPDATE REGARDING INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL: Department of Health COVID-19 Update

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TALLAHASSEE — The Florida Department of Health is responding to COVID-19. In an effort to keep Florida residents and visitors safe and aware about the status of the virus, the Department is issuing regular updates as information becomes available. The Department will be sending this press release update every morning, seven days per week.

International Travel Advisory

The Florida Department of Health is advising all individuals who have traveled internationally to follow the **new CDC guidelines**, summarized below:

- **Level 3:** Mandatory 14-day self-isolation and practice social distancing upon return to the United States. Social distancing includes avoiding going out in public and close personal interactions. If you become symptomatic, immediately self-isolate and contact your county health department or health care provider.
- **Level 2 and Cruises:** Monitor your health and limit interactions with others for 14 days after returning to the United States. If you become symptomatic, immediately self-isolate and contact your county health department or health care provider.
- For more information regarding current CDC travel advisories related to COVID-19, visit: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html>

Nile Cruise Advisory

The Florida Department of Health is advising all individuals who traveled on a river cruise on the Nile River in Egypt in February 2020 to self-isolate for 14 days following their date of return to the United States. Several passengers in the United States recently developed symptoms and have been confirmed to be infected with coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), including two positive cases in Florida.

COVID-19 Cases

Florida Residents Diagnosed in Florida

	County	Age	Sex	Known History of International Travel
1	Manatee	63	Male	No
2	Hillsborough	29	Female	Yes
3	Santa Rosa	71	Male	Yes
4	Broward	75	Male	No
5	Broward	65	Male	No
6	Lee	77	Female	Yes
7	Lee	77	Male	Yes
8	Charlotte	54	Female	Yes
9	Okaloosa	61	Female	Yes
10	Volusia	66	Female	Yes
11	Manatee	81	Female	Yes
12	Broward	67	Male	No

COVID-19 Testing Results

- 18 Florida cases (17 Florida residents)
 - 12 diagnosed in Florida
 - 5 diagnosed and isolated in another state
 - 1 confirmed positive non-Florida resident isolated in Florida.
- 115 tests in state results pending
- 140 negatives
- 1,104 people monitored to date
- 302 of 1,104 are currently being monitored

People who have tested positive for COVID-19 will remain in isolation until they test negative.

COVID Public Website and Call Center

Please visit the Department's dedicated [COVID-19 webpage](#) for information and guidance regarding COVID-19 in Florida.

For any other questions related to COVID-19 in Florida, please contact the Department's dedicated COVID-19 Call Center by calling **1-(866) 779-6121**. **The Call Center is available 24 hours a day**. Inquiries may also be emailed to COVID-19@flhealth.gov.

Department Activities

- Governor Ron DeSantis issued an Executive Order directing the State Surgeon General to declare a public health emergency.
- State Surgeon General Dr. Scott Rivkees declared a public health emergency for the novel coronavirus in Florida.
- Established an incident management team to coordinate response operations.
- Activated a dedicated incident command post for on-site response activities.
- Conducted three public health and healthcare stakeholders conference calls to provide statewide updates on the current outbreak situation, response actions, and guidance for pandemic planning. Over five hundred participants joined the calls. Calls are scheduled for each Wednesday at 2:00 EST.
- Participated with the Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA) on statewide conference calls with nursing homes, assisted living facilities, and hospitals.
- Established a public call-center for questions regarding COVID-19.
- Developed and distributed the communications approved COVID-19 Presentation to CHDs for use at community meetings.
- Developed and implemented protocols for investigation, surveillance and monitoring for COVID-19 to rapidly detect and contain cases.
- Established mechanisms for on-going monitoring and coordination with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) regarding epidemiological activities.
- Distributed CDC Interim Guidance for Public Health Personnel Evaluating Persons Under Investigation (PUIs) and Asymptomatic Close Contacts of Confirmed Cases at Their Home or Non-Home Residential Settings to County Health Departments
- Distributed the updated Clinician Screening Tool for Identifying Persons Under Investigation for Coronavirus Disease and a healthcare provider letter regarding Enhanced Surveillance and Preparedness for Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) to associations, licensed providers, Health Care Coalitions (HCCs) and County Health Departments (CHD).
- Implemented testing at all three State Public health Laboratories.
- Distributed updated CDC guidance for schools to CHDs and the Department of Education.
- Distributed updated Laboratory Guidance regarding implementation of testing at State Public Health Laboratories.

What you Should Know

COVID-19 can spread from person to person through small droplets from the nose or mouth, including when an individual coughs or sneezes. These droplets may land on objects and surfaces. Other people may contract COVID-19 by touching these objects or surfaces, then touching their eyes, nose or mouth.

Symptoms of COVID-19 are fever, cough and shortness of breath. Symptoms may appear in as few as two days or as many as 14 days following exposure. Most people recover from COVID-19 without needing special treatment. The elderly and those with underlying medical problems like high blood pressure, heart problems and diabetes, are more likely to develop serious illness.

There is currently no vaccine to prevent COVID-19. The best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to the virus. The Department recommends everyday preventive actions to help stop the spread of respiratory diseases, including:

- Avoiding close contact with people who are sick;
- Staying home when you are sick and avoiding contact with persons in poor health;
- Avoiding touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands;
- Covering your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then disposing of the tissue;
- Washing your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom, before eating, after blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing;
- If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. Always wash hands with soap and water if hands are visibly dirty; and
- Cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.

The CDC does not recommend that asymptomatic, healthy people wear a facemask to protect themselves from respiratory diseases, including COVID-19. Facemasks should be used by people who show symptoms of COVID-19 to help prevent the spread of the disease to others. The use of facemasks is also crucial for [health workers](#) and [people who are taking care of someone in close settings](#) (at home or in a health care facility).

A person that experiences a fever and symptoms of respiratory illness, such as fever, cough or shortness of breath, within 14 days after travel from China, Italy, Iran, South Korea, Japan and any other destination under [CDC travel advisory](#) should call ahead to their health care provider and local county health department (CHD) and mention their recent travel or close contact.

If a person has had close contact with someone showing these symptoms who has recently traveled from this area or been in contact with a person with laboratory-confirmed COVID-19, they should call ahead to a health care professional and the county health department. The health care professional will work with the Department to determine if the person should be tested for COVID-19.

About the Florida Department of Health

The Florida Department of Health, nationally accredited by the [Public Health Accreditation Board](#), works to protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts.

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