

FLORIDA COVID-19 UPDATE

CONFIRMED CASES / TESTING

Confirmed Case Status for COVID-19:

As of Tuesday, March 24, there were 1412 cases and 18 deaths.

Testing Status for COVID-19:

As of Tuesday, March 24, there were 1554 tests completed with 13,127 negative results, 1412 positive results and 1,008 results pending.

The confirmed cases and testing numbers are updated at 11am and 6pm daily. More information can be found on the [Florida Department of Health's COVID-19 dashboard](#).

The Florida Department of Health (DOH) and the Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA) are highlighting current guidance related COVID-19 testing for the elderly or individuals with a serious underlying medical condition. Information can be found [here](#).

PHARMACY

Emergency Refills: The Governor signed [Executive Order 20-52](#) that allows pharmacists/pharmacies to refill prescriptions early.

MEDICAID

AHCA has set up a link to all Medicaid Provider and managed care organization guidance letters. This site is updated as new alerts are posted [here](#).

Prior authorizations and maintenance prescriptions: In order to reduce administrative burdens on key providers, Florida Medicaid is waiving prior authorization requirements for medically necessary hospital services, physician services, advanced practice registered nursing services, physician assistant services, home health services, and durable medical equipment and supplies. In addition to the services listed above, Florida Medicaid is waiving prior authorization requirements for all services (except pharmacy services) necessary to appropriately evaluate and treat Medicaid recipients diagnosed with COVID-19. Florida Medicaid will reimburse for a 90-day supply of maintenance prescriptions when available at the pharmacy. The recipient must request that the pharmacy dispense a 90-day supply. In addition, Florida Medicaid is waiving any limits on mail order delivery of maintenance prescriptions. Florida Medicaid and managed care plans will pay for a 90-day supply of maintenance prescriptions through mail order delivery. To view the Florida Medicaid Health Care Alert click [here](#). To view the Statewide Medicaid Managed Care (SMMC) Policy Transmittal: 2020-15 click [here](#).

[Telemedicine Guidance](#): Florida Medicaid has expanded telemedicine/telehealth services in the fee-for-service delivery system for physicians, APRNs, physician assistants. In addition, Florida Medicaid has expanded telemedicine coverage to:

- Behavior analysis services
- Therapy services
- Specified behavioral health services
- Early intervention services

On March 16, 2020, Florida was the first state to be granted a waiver under Section 1135. We expect that Florida Medicaid will provide further guidance on implementation of the waivers in the next few days. The waivers and modifications take effect on March 15, with a retroactive effective date of March 1, 2020. The waiver deals with 4 key areas:

Provider participation

- Waiver of Service Prior Authorization (PA) Requirements.
- Waiver for Pre-Admission Screening and Annual Resident Review (PASRR) Level I Level II Assessments for 30 Days.
- Waiver to allow evacuating facilities to provide services in alternative settings, such as a temporary shelter when a provider's facility is inaccessible.
- State fair hearing requests and appeal deadlines.

For more information on the waiver click [here](#).

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

The Florida Department of Corrections (FDC) has put precautions in place at facilities to protect inmates and staff from COVID-19 based on CDC recommendations. For example, new inmate commitments from county jails have been temporarily restricted. Anyone entering a correctional institution will be screened in accordance with CDC and Department guidelines. FDC has suspended visitation and volunteer programs at all correctional institutions statewide through April 5, 2020. For more information on FDC's COVID-19 response click [here](#).

FLORIDA OFFICE OF INSURANCE REGULATION

Florida's Office of Insurance Regulation has issued three information memoranda. [Informational Memorandum OIR-20-03M](#) directs all insurers and other entities regulated by OIR to review and update their business continuity and/or continuity of operations plans. [Informational Memorandum OIR-20-01M](#) directs health insurers to: use every channel available to communicate with their policyholders and share official CDC and DOH information; devote resources to inform consumers of available benefits, quickly respond to inquiries, and avoid and dispel misinformation; work with public health officials to do everything possible to prepare and respond; and consider all practicable options to reduce the barriers of cost-sharing for testing and treatment of COVID-19. [Informational Memorandum OIR-20-02M](#) reminds to all health insurers to allow for early prescription refills following the Governor's Executive Order 20-52 declaring a state of emergency in Florida.

CURFEW/STAY IN PLACE ORDER

- In his daily COVID-19 briefing, Governor DeSantis on March 23rd said that he has no plans to issue a statewide shelter-in-place executive order in Florida. The Governor said, “that would be a very blunt instrument. It’s not advisable and it’s not necessary.” Over 50 percent of Florida’s COVID-19 cases are concentrated in Broward, Miami-Dade, and Palm Beach counties. While the governor has been reluctant to issue a statewide shelter-in-place order, several cities and counties have issued their own local orders. The Florida Chamber of Commerce is encouraging the governor to follow the Department of Homeland Security’s guidelines should he move forward with a statewide shelter order.

Below are links to the recent shelter in place local government orders:

- **March 24, 2020:** Leon County [Stay at Home Emergency Order](#)
 - **March 23, 2020:** Alachua County Stay at Home [Emergency Order 2020-09](#)
 - **March 23, 2020:** City of Miami Beach [“Safer at Home” Emergency Order](#)
 - **March 22, 2020:** Broward County Shelter in Place [Emergency Order 2020-01](#)
 - **March 17, 2020:** Miami-Dade County Shelter in Place [Emergency Order 07-20](#)
- The Governor has authorized travel outside of any curfews when it is necessary to deliver critical medical supplies, pharmaceuticals, and/or health care delivery services to medical facilities. Letter can be found [here](#).

EXECUTIVE ORDERS

March 23, 2020: Governor DeSantis sent a [letter](#) to President Trump formally requesting that he declare a Major Disaster as Florida responds to COVID-19. The letter requested the inclusion of the following Individual Assistance Programs in the declaration: Disaster Unemployment Assistance, Crisis Counseling, Community Disaster Loans and the Disaster Supplemental Nutrition Program. In addition to the Individual Assistance Programs, the declaration requests additional resources and support from FEMA.

[Executive Order 2020-80:](#) Emergency Management – COVID-19– Airport Screening and Isolation

March 23, 2020: Governor DeSantis issued an executive order mandating a 14-day self-quarantine or isolation period for travelers coming to Florida from airports in New York, New Jersey and Connecticut amid the coronavirus pandemic.

[Executive Order 2020-72:](#) Emergency Management – Elective Medical Procedures

March 20, 2020: In an effort to preserve essential resources, this executive order prohibits hospitals, surgical centers, dental, orthodontic offices and other health care practitioners’ offices from providing any medically unnecessary, non-urgent or non-emergency procedure.

[Executive Order 2020-71:](#) Emergency Management – Alcohol Sales, Restaurants and Gyms

March 20, 2020: This executive order provides flexibility on alcohol sales by allowing sale for off-premise consumption by those previously prohibited by law. The order suspends on-premise food consumption

but allows establishments to operate their kitchens for delivery or take out services. Additionally, the executive order closes gyms and fitness centers.

[Executive Order 2020-70](#): Emergency Management – Broward and Palm Beach County Closures

March 20, 2020: This executive order closes on-premise service of customers in restaurants, bars, night clubs, banquet halls in Broward and Palm Beach Counties. Establishments can continue to operate kitchens for delivery services, employees, janitorial personnel, contractors and delivery personnel. Additionally, this executive order closes movie theatres, concert houses, auditoriums, playhouses and beaches in Broward County and Palm Beach County.

[Executive Order 2020-69](#): Emergency Management – Local Government Public Meetings

March 20, 2020: Following a consultation with Attorney General Ashley Moody, this EO gives further insight to local governments regarding teleconferencing and other technological support in order to comply with the CDC guidance regarding social distancing.

[Executive Order 2020-52](#): Emergency Management – Public Health Emergency

March 9, 2020: With eight counties' confirmed cases, the Governor issues a State of Emergency for Florida. The emergency declaration allows for a unified command structure to limit the spread of the virus and helps the state more effectively mobilize resources. The order activates the Division of Emergency Management and the State Emergency Operations Center to provide coordination and response. Additionally, this EO provides flexibility and autonomy to local municipalities, prescription drug refills, and medical licensing.

[Executive Order 2020-51](#): Establishes Coronavirus Response Protocol – Directs Public Health Emergency

March 1, 2020: In response to the first two identified cases of COVID-19, Governor DeSantis issued EO 2020-51 which establishes a unified command, including the State Health Officer and Surgeon General, Dr. Scott Rivkees and the Department of Health as the lead state agency to coordinate response.

FLORIDA SMALL BUSINESS EMERGENCY BRIDGE LOAN PROGRAM

Governor DeSantis activated the Florida Small Business Emergency Bridge Loan Program which is administered by Florida's Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO) in partnership with the Florida SBDC Network and Florida First Capital Finance Corporation. Up to \$50 million has been allocated for the program to provide cash flow to businesses economically impacted by COVID-19. The short-term, interest-free loans help bridge the gap between the time the economic impact occurred and when a business secures other financial resources, including payment of insurance claims or longer-term Small Business Administration (SBA) loans. Small business owners with two to 100 employees located in Florida affected by COVID-19 can apply for short-term loans up to \$50,000. To be eligible, a business must have been established prior to March 9, 2020, and demonstrate economic impacts as a result of COVID-19. The application period ends May 8, 2020. Businesses can apply [here](#).

TAXES

Governor DeSantis directed the Department of Revenue (DOR) to provide flexibility on the deadlines of taxes due such as corporate income tax and sales tax to assist businesses that are adversely impacted

from COVID-19 mitigation measures. DOR's General Tax Administration (GTA) program is closely monitoring any future guidance issued by the Internal Revenue Service for potential corporate income tax due date extensions. Further guidance can be found at [DOR's website](#).

ATTORNEY GENERAL'S ACTIONS

Florida Attorney General Ashley Moody [activated Florida's Price Gouging hotline](#) for all consumers in the state. Violators of the price gouging statute are subject to civil penalties of \$1,000 per violation and up to a total of \$25,000 for multiple violations committed in a single 24-hour period. Click here for [a list of commodities](#) covered under the state's price gouging laws. Consumers may call the hotline at (866) 9NO-SCAM if they suspect prices on goods have been artificially escalated to exploit the scare. Scams can also be reported at www.MyFloridaLegal.com. For more information on price gouging, please click [here](#).