

# TSE

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Governor Ron DeSantis, Broward County Mayor Dale Holness and Urban League of Broward County CEO Germaine Smith-Baugh held a press conference at the Urban League of Broward this morning, April 17<sup>th</sup>.

## Governor Ron DeSantis:

- Testing
  - We have focused on testing from the beginning, we are neck and neck with California in terms of testing
  - Done over 225,000 tests
  - One of the things we wanted to do was access to testing
  - Did the first drive-thru test site with the National Guard at CB Smith Park
  - All of the drive-thru sites have done 56,000 tests throughout the state
  - At the same time, not everyone has access to do a drive-in site, so we wanted to see where the gaps were in testing access
- New concept is walk-up community testing sites
  - First thing we did was to go to people at underserved communities in Jacksonville in partnership with the University of Florida
  - One at Urban League and at Mitchell Moore Park in Pompano
    - Partnership with Dr. Germaine Smith-Baugh, with the Urban League, Fort Lauderdale Mayor Dean Trantalis, Broward County Mayor Holness, Administrator Henry, Sheriff Gregory Tony, Department of Emergency Management and the National Guard
  - 60 National Guardsman with the Department of Health and locals will operate these sites
  - Eligibility is anyone who is symptomatic over 16, you can either walk-up or call ahead to make an appointment
    - **Symptomatic individuals can call 954-412-7300 for appointment**
  - Each client will receive a bag of resources upon leaving site
  - County Health Department will follow up with each person and provide opportunities to connect to telehealth
  - 200 tests per site per day
  - When the model is proven successful, we will replicate in other areas
  - Urban League of Broward is consistently demonstrating how they effectively use state funds and we know they will excel with our partnership here
- Unemployment
  - Understanding that this has displaced way too many workers through no fault of their own
  - System was overwhelmed at the beginning, we knew we had to do an all hands on deck approach
  - We've had huge changes to bring in better results, brought in 100 new servers

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- Last year we got 350,000 applications for the whole year
- Brought in 2000 people who are now involved in training or actively taking calls
  - This is a ramp up from 30 people
  - We have overseen a massive surge of resources with the identification of 2000 employees in the State of Florida
- Recognizing that not everyone has access to computers, we have partnered with FedEx
  - We have received over 20,000 paper applications from FedEx
- Emphasis now on getting funds out as quickly as possible
- Since beginning of crisis, waived three laws: work search requirement, waived prohibition on receiving compensation the first week, and waived re-certification process
- Things have gotten better, but we are not there yet
- Last week sent out 35,000 payments, this week sent out 100,000 payments
  - Have to continue to ramp up as much as possible so we can allow people to put food on the table
- Thank you to Jon Satter for standing up the call center and surging the state employees
- It's a 7-day a week and 24-hour operation
- Hospitalization
  - 30-day to stop the spread was to ensure that the slowing of the spread was important to allow hospitals to have the capacity to handle this
  - 43% of beds empty Statewide
  - 42%- Dade
  - 41%- Broward
  - 44%- Palm Beach
  - Lowest number of ICU patients since April 9th
  - Ingenuity of our hospital workers has been incredible
- **For Latest Texting Updates**
  - **For Covid-19 text FLCOVID19 to 888777**

### **Mayor Dale Holness, Broward County**

- Thank you to the Governor for the access you have given to our county
- Governor has demonstrated that you will clearly fight with us
- None of us are perfect, we may not always do the exact thing that is right, but as long as we make a continuous effort we can return to some sense of normalcy
- Very fitting to be at the corner of Sistrunk, a community that has the second highest cases while being typically underserved
- Kudos to Germaine Baugh-Smith and her team at the Urban League

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- Dr. Paula Thaqi (Broward County Health Department Director), you got heat early, but you worked to make sure that Broward is at the forefront of testing and preventing spread, and your efforts are working
- Now we are in a place where we have to think about the future economic impact
- Have to think about how we plan for the future and what this looks like, the uncomfortable efforts of

### **Germaine Smith-Baugh, Urban League of Broward**

- Welcome to the Urban League Empowerment Campus, a fitting title for what we are doing to ensure we are accessing underserved communities
- Thank you to the Governor for your continued support of all Urban Leagues
- Thank you to Gino Santorio (CEO of Broward Health) for standing up the walk-up testing sites
- There are many existing community-based networks willing and ready to stand up community responses to Covid
- The Coronavirus is killing African-Americans at a greater rate than other groups, we do not want to reflect the nation. The Governor's approach of looking at the social-determinants of health will slow this disease
- We will work to educate and inform to stop the spread and increase testing
- To my neighbors, I pound this drum not because I sat on a roundtable, but because I come from families like yours. I implore you to take pre-cautions, use testing sites if you are having symptoms and I look forward to seeing you at the Urban League after this.

### **Governor**

- It is exciting to see this partnership and we look to model more of these in Phase 2
- We will be ramping testing up going forward, recognizing the importance of preventing asymptomatic spread
- Rapid testing has allowed for less of a back log at existing testing facilities
- Having quick lab testing is crucial, that's why we are working on things in the State of Florida to increase testing capacity
- Broward's efforts to trace the spread and isolate in efforts to stop the spread worked

### **Press Questions**

- Number of Tests
  - If a doctor swabs and sends to LabCorp we don't know until there is a case. These tests are not reportable until they have a result, its not like the State is just sitting on them. We know the tests are out there but we can't report what we aren't made aware of.

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- Walk-Up Testing Sites
  - Hours are from 9-6, the pods are set up to adhere to social distancing and each person that comes in will receive a mask.
- Phase 2 for Southeast Florida
  - We have some other large counties like Hillsboro and Orange who do not have the same cases. I was criticized when I said it was not impacting Florida uniformly. Maybe Phase 2 looks different for Southeast Florida than the rest of the State. Mayors Holness and Gimenez (Miami-Dade) believe we need to think about Phase 2, but it is important to think about how it may look different for this region.
- Nursing Homes
  - Like other states, we have issued tougher regulations for nursing homes, we don't know what legal protections will be for workers who have been traced to bring the virus in, but many cases they were unaware. The Suwannee nursing home was traced to asymptomatic spread, that's why we have these National Guard strike teams. Also working with hospitals on proactively working with nursing homes. Next phase for Florida, you will see the same and even more testing at nursing homes.
- Phase 2
  - We will use the President's framework as a baseline, doesn't mean we will do everything. For example, looking at the transmission, its mostly through closed indoor spaces. We may be able to re-open outdoor areas, recognizing it is important to get people outside, but we need to promote this in socially distant, smart ways.
- Unemployment Claims
  - We did 100,000 payments this week, but we are finding the total number of submissions does not necessarily reflect the unique applicants. We have a lot of technology experts working on eliminating roadblocks. But we know many people in an effort to get their benefits submitted through Connect, PEGA and the paper application, so we will work through this later.
  - With the executive order, we removed the obligation to affirmatively re-certify that individual's unemployment status. We are working with larger employers to import data directly. We have put some of our office's staff over there to help the process.
- Masks
  - 3M does not distribute directly, but the distributors caused issues. What the President did with the Defense Production Act and our efforts with Granger and others has shaken some masks loose. What the White House has done has been positive. But we understand there will be a very long-term push on procuring PPE.



**Governor's Closing**

We will continue working with DEM and the National Guard. Our State has stood up model testing sites, it is directly attributable to the leadership of the Guard and I thank all who serve.