Joint Information Center on COVID-19 for the State of Florida

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Contact: Joint Information Center on COVID-19 for the State of Florida
(850) 815-4940, ESF14@em.myflorida.com

Florida Department of Health Announces One Additional Positive COVID-19 Case in Florida for March 12th

TALLAHASSEE — Tonight, the Florida Department of Health announced one additional positive case of coronavirus disease (COVID-19), bringing the total confirmed new cases for Thursday, March 12th to 17 individuals who tested positive for COVID-19. 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.

This latest positive COVID-19 case was tested in a Florida Department of Health lab. The Department of Health is now including results from private laboratories in these daily reports. Results from private labs will initially include fewer details, such as travel, because the state epidemiological team does not learn about the private lab cases until the results are added into the state system. As soon as the Department of Health learns of a positive case from a private lab, the epidemiological investigation begins. The Department of Health will provide additional information about private lab cases as soon as details become available.

New Positive Case

- A 42-year old male in Miami-Dade County has tested positive for COVID-19. This individual is isolated and will continue to remain isolated until cleared by public health officials. This is a travel related case and is associated with exposure to an international traveler.

International Travel

U.S. Department of State – Global Level 3 Health Advisory

The U.S. Department of State advises U.S. citizens to reconsider travel abroad due to the global impact of COVID-19. Many areas throughout the world are now experiencing COVID-19 outbreaks and taking action that may limit traveler mobility, including quarantines and border restrictions. Even countries, jurisdictions, or areas where cases have not been reported may restrict travel without notice.

CDC Guidelines

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

- **Level 3 Travel Advisory:** CDC recommends 14-day self-isolation and 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 Travel Advisory and Cruises:** Travelers should monitor their health and limit interactions with others for 14 days after returning to the United States. If you become symptomatic, immediately self-isolate and they should call ahead to a health care professional or their county health department before seeking treatment.
    - According to CDC, a cruise ship is defined as a passenger vessel involving the movement of large numbers of people in closed and semi-closed settings.

- For more information regarding current CDC travel advisories related to COVID-19, visit: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html

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 or local County Health Department (CHD) and mention their recent travel or close contact, unless they are experiencing an emergency.

If a person has had close contact with someone showing these symptoms who has recently traveled from areas 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.

Nile Cruise Advisory

The Florida Department of Health is advising all individuals who traveled to Egypt for a cruise or tour on the Nile River in February or March 2020 to self-isolate for 14 days following their date of return to the United States, and if ill, immediately contact their CHD or health care provider. Several passengers in the United States recently developed symptoms and have been confirmed to be infected with COVID-19, including 11 positive cases in Florida.

COVID-19 Cases

Florida Residents Diagnosed in Florida				
	County	Age	Sex	Travel** Related
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
13	Volusia	60	Female	Yes
14	Broward	69	Female	No
15	Nassau	68	Male	Yes
16	Collier	73	Male	Yes
17	Collier	68	Female	Yes
18	Collier	64	Female	Yes
19	Pinellas	67	Male	Yes
20	Pinellas	64	Male	Yes
21	Pasco	46	Male	Yes
22	Miami-Dade	56	Male	Yes
23	Broward	70	Male	Under Investigation
24	Lee	57	Male	Under Investigation
25	Broward	65	Male	Under Investigation

26	Broward	61	Male	Yes
27*	Seminole	68	Male	Yes
28	Palm Beach	73	Male	Yes
29	Palm Beach	74	Male	Yes
30	Sarasota	50	Male	Under Investigation
31	Sarasota	70	Male	Under Investigation
32	Alachua	24	Female	Yes
33	Volusia	70	Male	Yes
34	Duval	83	Male	Under Investigation
35	Clay	57	Male	Under Investigation
36	Broward	28	Female	Under Investigation
37	Broward	25	Female	Under Investigation
38	Broward	68	Female	Under Investigation
39	Broward	36	Male	Under Investigation
40	Hillsborough	49	Female	Under Investigation
41	Lee	77	Male	Under Investigation
42	Miami-Dade	42	Male	Yes

* The Department of Health will confirm cases reported by commercial labs.

** A known history of exposure to COVID-19 outside of the state.

Port Everglades Advisory

The Department, through an extensive epidemiological investigation, has identified four positive COVID-19 cases associated with Port Everglades in Broward County, Florida.

All three cases are connected to or employed by Metro Cruise Services – a company that operates at Port Everglades.

- The Department recommends all individuals experiencing symptoms who have recently traveled through Port Everglades to immediately contact their CHD or health care provider and self-isolate for 14 Days.

- The Department also recommends employees of Metro Cruise Services at Port Everglades with any association to these cases self-isolate at home.
- The Department is working to connect with all employees at Metro Cruise Services who may have come into contact with the three individuals who have tested positive for COVID-19 to provide the employees with the appropriate guidance and monitoring.
- The Department is working in close consultation with the CDC on this investigation.
- CDC recommends that individuals with recent travel history on a cruise monitor their health for 14 days and, if they develop symptoms, immediately self-isolate and contact their CHD or health care provider.

COVID-19 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.**

Actions the State of Florida has taken on COVID-19:

- Governor Ron DeSantis issued Executive Order 20-52declaring a State of Emergency for COVID-19.
- Governor Ron DeSantis directed the Florida Division of Emergency Management to activate to Level II to coordinate the state's response to COVID-19.
- Governor Ron DeSantis issued Executive Order 20-51directing the State Surgeon General to declare a Public Health Emergency.
- State Surgeon General Dr. Scott Rivkees declared a Public Health Emergency for COVID-19 in Florida.
- Established an Incident Management Team to coordinate response operations.
- Activated a dedicated incident command post for on-site response activities.
- Conducted public health and health care stakeholder conference calls to provide statewide updates on the current outbreak situation, response actions and guidance for pandemic planning. Over five hundred participants joined these calls.

- 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 an updated COVID-19 presentation to CHDs for use at community meetings.
- Implemented protocols for investigation, surveillance and monitoring for COVID-19 to rapidly detect and contain cases.
- Established mechanisms for ongoing monitoring and coordination with the 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 CHDs.
- Distributed the updated Clinician Screening Tool for identifying PUIs for COVID-19 and a health care provider letter regarding Enhanced Surveillance and Preparedness for COVID-19 to associations, licensed providers, Health Care Coalitions and CHDs.
- 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.
- In an effort to be proactive, and only as a precautionary measure if COVID-19 evolves in Florida, Florida Virtual School (FLVS) has partnered with the Florida Department of Education to offer all school districts student support and teacher professional development tailored to the online learning environment. The Florida Department of Education in partnership with FLVS is training an additional 10,000 teachers statewide on the Virtual Teacher Training for COVID-19. Superintendents who are interested in offering their teachers the Virtual Teacher Training for COVID-19 should work with their County Virtual Principals to provide a list of teachers to FLVS through: https://www.flvs.net/FLVSTeacherTraining.
- Governor DeSantis directed the Florida Division of Emergency Management and the Agency for Health Care Administration to take action to restrict access to vulnerable populations for those who may have been exposed to COVID-19. The Governor also directed the Florida Department of Corrections to suspend visitation at state prisons for 30 days.

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 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 CHD. The health care provider 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.

Follow us on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter at @HealthyFla. For more information please visit www.FloridaHealth.gov.

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