



Jewish Federation OF GREATER HOUSTON

March 26 PM - JРАН Email

Dear JРАН Community:

There is a lot of new information today, so I tried to break it down by broad categories. I hope you find this format helpful and easy to read. The Federation is continuing to update its [COVID19 resource page](#) on the new website. If you have any information to add, please reply to this email and I will pass it along.

New Executive Order Issued and Medicaid Waiver

Governor Gregg Abbot has issued [a new executive order](#) requiring all persons entering Texas from the New York-Tri State Area and New Orleans to enter into a mandatory self-quarantine for 14 days. The Governor also extended a [Medicaid Waiver](#) to allow for telehealth and telemedicine to be utilized during this crisis.

\$2-trillion Federal COVID19 Relief Package

Yesterday, the [Senate unanimously passed a \\$2.2-trillion aid package](#) covering a swath of items related to COVID19. To give you an idea, this aid package equals about 10% of the United States GDP last year. While it is exciting that this bill passed the Senate, it still has a ways to go. Next stop will be the United States House of Representatives. As a former legislative aide, I know nothing is guaranteed until it is signed by the President. I am cautiously optimistic over the package, and once there are indications that the final bill will head to the President, I will be sure to offer some guidance about what it means for our community.

Houston Rabbinical Association

The Houston Rabbinical Association [released a set of guidelines](#) to help our community plan for certain lifecycle events that might happen during this COVID19 crisis. These recommendations cover funerals, unveilings, shiva, Brit/Brith/Baby Namings, B'nai/B'not Mitzvah, and weddings.

The Medical Center and Caring for the Elderly

Today, [Interfaith Ministries](#), the [Greater Houston Partnership](#), and the Office of the Mayor, hosted a call for faith leaders. During the call, the Texas Medical Center (TMC) announced that,

in addition to postponing all elective medical procedures to conserve bed space, they will also be limiting visitors to only essential persons. Here's what that means:

- Only **one** visitor will be allowed for births, to be with those who are dying, or upon death
- People with cognitive issues or those with a disability that require a caregiver will be addressed on a case-by-case basis
- There are different guidelines concerning minor patients, so it is important to consult your medical provider before arriving
- **The restrictions include clergy.** TMC is asking that all clergy work with TMC staff to arrange for virtual visitations via phone or video

One question asked during the call was whether it would be wise to have elderly or vulnerable family members move in with family during this time. Both the Harris Health and the Houston Health Department cautioned against these well-intentioned moves. They recommended that you balance the needs of a family member (fall risk, how well are they able to care for themselves) against the possibility of accidentally infecting a loved-one with COVID19. Officials encouraged family to drop food, supplies, and medicine at their doorstep and allow them to continue to live in isolation so long as they are able.

Funerals and Wedding

All funerals and viewings must be limited to 10 people. Harris Health is encouraging social distancing for in-person funerals and streaming for those who wish to attend virtually. Funeral homes are considered essential services and will remain open.

Weddings are not considered essential and must be postponed. In addition to these guidelines, it is important to note that the [Houston Health Department Bureau of Vital Statistics](#) (birth and death certificates) office is closed to the public until further notice. You may still order online records and the standard fee will be waived. Likewise, the [Harris County Clerk's office](#) (marriage licenses and voting) are closed until further notice. You can call the Personal Records Department at 713-274-8686 for more information.

Donate Blood and Volunteer Opportunities

The Gulf Coast Regional Blood Center needs blood donors during this difficult time. All donation centers will be practicing social distancing and asking that people reserve a time slot online. Our friends at the ERJCC will be hosting a [community blood drive on April 1st from 8:30 am – 1 pm](#). [Volunteer Houston](#) has additional ways you can help our community.



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If you have anything you think our Jran community should know about, please send it my way.

I hope you all have a chance to enjoy some sun today.

Take care and be well,

Jackie

Jackie Fisherman | Director of Government Affairs

Jewish Federation of Greater Houston

5603 S. Braeswood Blvd. | Houston, TX 77096

Main: 713.729.7000 ext 325

jfisherman@houstonjewish.org | www.houstonjewish.org