



Jewish Federation OF GREATER HOUSTON

April 21 PM - Jran Email

Dear Jran Community:

Today, we will go over updates from the City and County, circle back to our work on resiliency and security, and, finally, remember and honor the victims of the Holocaust on this Yom HaShoah.

Updates from the City of Houston and Harris County

This afternoon, Mayor Turner announced a partnership with the Houston Food Bank and Walmart to establish a food distribution center at the [West Gray Multipurpose Center](#). This new food pantry will be for persons with disabilities and METRO will help deliver food to individuals who are unable to go to the multiservice center in person. Houstonians with disabilities can call 832-394-0814 for non-perishable food delivery.

The Houston Food Bank announced that they are currently operating at 150% capacity. The food bank has [several ways you can help](#) during this crisis, from volunteering to food donations to mask donations.

There were 20 new COVID19 positive cases in the City of Houston and no new fatalities. Harris County saw 146 new cases and 1 new fatality. These [numbers are promising](#), and the Texas Medical Center is reporting that they are still within their current capacity. However, government officials use the bed capacity in the hospitals to gauge the COVID19 curve. These are [found via the SETRAC website](#). The current bed usage for COVID19 positive cases has flattened in Harris County but officials are waiting to see a sustained decline.

Both the Mayor and County Judge emphasized that the current [Stay Home, Work Safe](#) order and the use of face masks and social distancing are working. Now is not the time to lessen the restrictions out of fear that there will be a spike in new cases that takes our hospital system above capacity. Both Dr. Persse (City of Houston) and Dr. Shaw (Harris County) spoke about the need to contain asymptomatic and pre-symptomatic persons so they do not contribute to the spreading of COVID19. Therefore, the Mayor and County Judge are emphasizing the use of face masks for all people when out in public—whether you are doing a grocery run or going for a run in a park. The CDC has released [instructions for homemade face coverings](#).

Additionally, the Mayor and County Judge indicated that they are working well with Governor Abbott and that they see no issues with the retail to-go order or the re-opening of state parks with the social distancing restrictions in place and mandate on face masks.

Judge Hidalgo mentioned the [cautionary tale of Singapore](#), which was a leader in COVID19 management until cases spiked uncontrollably. Now Singapore has the highest infection rate of all Southeast Asia.

Finally, Dr. Shaw stressed that people experiencing other medical emergencies, like a heart attack or stroke, should go to the emergency room. He stated that area hospitals have taken measures to separate general emergency room patients from COVID19 patients.

Hurricane Season and Security

Before COVID19 was widespread in the Houston area, the JLAN was meeting to discuss hurricane resiliency and security. These are important issues that we need to continue thinking about as we look forward.

[Hurricane season is June 1 – November 30](#). The Texas Emergency Preparation Supplies Tax Holiday is April 25-27th. All [approved emergency preparation purchases](#), including hand sanitizer and soap, will be tax exempt during this time. In order to encourage social distancing, online purchases are also included (be sure to read the fine print!). Federation staff are picking up where we left off and are looking into potential issues caused by a natural disaster during the pandemic and how we can prepare the Houston Jewish community to the best of our ability. If this is of interest to you or if you have ideas about how we can prepare, [please let me know](#) so we can continue this important work.

We also need to be thinking about security both now and as we prepare for when the social distancing restrictions are eased. We hope that someone from your staff is regularly checking in on your building during this time, ensuring that doors remain locked and that nothing has been tampered with during the interim. We also need to think through our strategy for when we return to in-person services or school. There will be a strong desire to open our doors to everyone in the community, but we need to be aware of the potential for bad actors to use this as an opportunity.

In Other News...



Jewish Federation

OF GREATER HOUSTON

Today is Yom HaShoah, International Holocaust Remembrance Day. As we partake in virtual commemorative events, like the Federation's Zikaron BaSalon event last night, we remember the six million lives lost and we honor the survivors. Here is a [touching video](#) of Israeli soldiers saluting a Holocaust survivor outside her home in Israel.

Take care tonight and I hope we all take a moment to pause so we never forget,

Jackie

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