



Jewish Federation OF GREATER HOUSTON

May 20 PM - JРАН Email

Dear JРАН Community:

Today, we will go over updates from the City and County, why medical professionals are torn on reopening Texas, HISD's summer meal distribution plan, a look at Houston's economy, the latest on voting by mail, and an update on Hurricane season.

County and City Updates

Harris County has released an [updated dashboard](#) for tracking COVID19. You can search by zip code, find testing locations and take a self-assessment. The dashboard also gives a view of Texas and Global cases.

Mayor Turner's press conference today focused on wearing masks when out in public because there are so many people who are [asymptomatic out unknowingly spreading the virus](#) to others. Dr. Persse explained that masks, sanitization, social distancing, and proper hygiene practices are the only tools we have in our toolbox to proactively combat this virus. Any face covering will do so long as your nose and mouth are covered.

Medical Professionals Torn on Open Texas

The medical community is recognizing that a global pandemic is more than a health crisis—its also an economic one. Health professionals from Houston know that COVID19 might be with us for a while and we cannot continue to live in lockdown. While doctors do not agree with everything in the Open Texas phased plans, [several do give the Governor credit for taking a measured approach](#) (though some disagree, naturally) with the situation. So much of the Governor's plan hinges on individuals and businesses making the right decisions—promoting social distancing, requiring face masks, and follow the State's [prescribed best practices](#). But doctors are skeptical on how effective those measures will be as we reach quarantine fatigue.

HISD Adjusts Meal Program

HISD announced that their [summer meal program will switch to kids-only](#) beginning this June. During the pandemic, HISD provided about 30 pounds of food to families each day—by far the largest undertaking by any single school district across the county. This was thanks to a partnership with the Houston Food Bank. Moving forward, HISD will distribute smaller kids meals at 68 locations.

Houston's Economic Outlook

The Greater Houston Partnership released its May “Economy at a Glance” report today. This monthly report drills down the economic outlook from the U.S. to Texas to Houston. What should come as no surprise, the U.S. is in a “severe recession.” Texas and Houston generally mirror the national trends. If you are curious how COVID19 has affected different sectors, you might find the [report](#) helpful.

Will We Be Voting By Mail?

That is the question on a lot of people's minds. Earlier this month, Harris County made an announcement that people who fear contracting COVID19 can request a mail-in ballot for the runoffs and general elections. Many counties across the U.S. made similar moves. These allowances are now being challenged in federal court (and on Twitter). Yesterday, a federal appeals court ruled that counties may allow mail-in ballots related to COVID19 but today the [5th Circuit of Appeals placed a hold](#) on the lower court's ruling so they can consider the question. So, the answer the question: to be determined.

Hurricane Season 2020

Hurricane season is off to an early start. The first named storm of the season is tropical storm Arthur in the Atlantic. He made a [quick visit to North Carolina's outer banks](#) before splitting into a post-tropical storm.

Michigan is experiencing [catastrophic flooding](#) after severe storms overwhelmed the dam system in Midland County. Some areas are expected to receive around 9 feet of water. Their response gives us a window into what emergency operations will look like during the current health crisis.



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The Federation will be hosting its second Conversation Starter on hurricane preparedness. I encourage you to save the (new) date: **May 28th at 11 A.M.** A separate email will be sent with registration information.

In Other News...

Do you like cereal? Do you like pancakes? Well, now you can have your (pan)cake and eat it, too! [Pancake cereal](#) is the newest baking trend taking the Internet. Basically, you make a bunch of super small pancakes and eat them from a bowl. And now you have something relevant to say during your family Zoom calls!

Take care today and I hope you find time to make 1,000 bite-sized pancakes,

Jackie

Jackie Fisherman | Director of Government Affairs

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