



Jewish Federation OF GREATER HOUSTON

May 26 PM - Jran Email

Dear Jran Community,

Today, we will cover updates from Federal, State, County and City Officials, a word on herd immunity and vaccines, and updates on the Paycheck Protection Program.

Updates from Federal, State, County and City Officials

The United States has issued [travel restrictions for all foreign nationals who have been to Brazil](#) in the past 14 days, effective tonight at midnight. This is two days earlier than originally announced. U.S. Citizens in Brazil can return home and are encouraged to do so immediately unless they expect to be in the country for an indefinite amount of time. This comes at a time when [COVID19 cases are soaring](#) as Brazil has taken few measures to limit its spread. [Brazil is now second in the world in confirmed cases](#), right behind the United States. The U.S. Embassy to Brazil has a [fact sheet](#) for those who might be affected.

According to Johns Hopkins University, there are over 1.6 million cases of COVID19 in the United States and over 350,000 in Brazil. The United States is reporting over 98,700 deaths due to the virus, nearly triple the United Kingdom, who is second in recorded deaths.

The Department of Homeland Security has a [natural decay calculator](#) for COVID19 on surfaces. You can click on the surface type, temperature and humidity level to see how long it will take for the virus to die.

Texas Governor Greg Abbott has [lifted travel restrictions](#) and mandatory quarantine for people traveling to Texas from neighboring areas that were known hot spots.

The Governor is also beginning a phased opening of drivers license offices beginning today. [Appointments must be made online](#) for limited services.

The Texas Secretary of State has issued "[Health Protocols for Voters](#)" in advance of the upcoming runoffs. Notable suggestions are:

- voters should wear a face mask (but be prepared to lower if election official needs to confirm identity),
- bring their own hand sanitizer,
- keep 6 feet away from others,
- persons aged 65 and older and those with COVID19 symptoms are encouraged to stay home and apply for a mail-in-ballot.

Harris County has their COVID19 [self-assessment](#) online. You can take the assessment and schedule your appointment for all Harris County sites. People can also call 832-927-7575.

The Houston Health Department has announced new hours for its call center. People can now call 832-393-4220 Monday – Saturday from 7 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Mayor Turner announced that Fire Marshalls will be able to enforce violations of the Open Texas occupancy limits. Pictures from crowded bars and restaurants in Houston resulted in [over 250 complaints to the City](#) this weekend. This compounds the City's efforts to contain the spread of COVID19 while the State continues to open-up. [Personal beliefs on face masks](#) and mixed messages on proper protocols are resulting in a confusing, yet critical time.

The Greater Houston Partnership has a new dashboard for [Reopening Houston Safely](#). This includes health metrics from the Texas Medical Center, economic metrics, and activity metrics.

A Word on Herd Immunity and Vaccines

The buzzword of the moment is herd immunity and many questions have been asked about what it will take to get there. A quick primer: herd immunity is when enough of a population has developed immunity to a virus that the disease stops spreading. This is typically accomplished through vaccines. Much of the talk these days has centered around [Sweden's choice to not shut down](#) and to rely on the public making the right decisions to protect themselves...or not. The latest evidence from Sweden has shown that their calculations on herd immunity were incorrect, resulting in a much higher COVID19 death rate than any other country in the world and lower than expected immunity rate among its population.

Experts at Johns Hopkins University state that [herd immunity is not achieved until 70%-90% of the community has developed immunity](#). They warn that in order to achieve effective herd immunity in the United States, it would require [over 200 million Americans to get COVID19 and over 500,000 people would have to die](#). Even if we went this route, at the current infection rates, it would take the United States into 2021 to achieve the rates we need.

The other option to achieve herd immunity would be to practice social distancing, mask wearing, and proper sanitization in order to buy additional time for vaccine development and treatment.

The Baker Institute at Rice University will be hosting a webinar on vaccine development with Dr. Peter Hotze. You can register [here](#).

Paycheck Protection Program Updates – More!

It's Monday, so that means there are more updates to the paycheck protection program. The Houston-based SBA director has issued [additional guidance on the PPP program](#). To note: there is now a [loan forgiveness application](#).

The Jewish Federation's of North America have put out a call to action in support of two PPP improvement bills. H.R. 6886 (House) and S. 3833 (Senate) would create more guidance for the PPP and add additional timing to the implementation of the bills. These two bills can be introduced as early as tomorrow.



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Please ask your Representatives and Senators to vote for the PPP improvement bill (H.R. 6886/S. 3833) that advances in the House and the Senate and expeditiously work to pass final legislation. To find out who represents you, click [here](#).

In Other News...

Zoom is going exclusive...and I mean, invite-only L.A. exclusive. Richard Weiz and his daughter, Demi have been hosting a Zoom concert series called "[Quaratunes](#)." Concerts take place live from an empty Hollywood Bowl or from a performer's home and have featured several A-list acts. The Zoom calls have included up to 1,000 people and have lasted 4.5 hours. They have raised \$3 million to benefit Youth Orchestra Los Angeles and No Kid Hungry. If you need me, I'll be over here waiting for my invitation...

Take care and I hope you receive an invite to an exclusive Zoom call,

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