



Jewish Federation OF GREATER HOUSTON

June 11 PM - Jran Email

Dear Jran Community:

Today, we will go over the increase in infections in Harris County, the new COVID19 Threat Level Dashboard, studies about wearing a mask, HISD's fall plans, why you shouldn't "be a knuckle head," project Brays and the Hilcroft Bridge work, and Jran's third Conversation Starter on security.

COVID19 Updates

Since the Memorial Day holiday weekend, the State of Texas has seen a [36% increase in COVID19 infections](#). Mayor Turner is careful [not to attribute the uptick in infections to the recent protests](#), rather it is largely due to the expected increase after the Governor began Open Texas and the fact that Harris Public Health does not process tests on Sundays, so there is a natural large increase after the weekends.

The Harris County "Stay Home, Work Safe" order has expired and there are no plans to reinstate it. Instead, Harris County and the City of Houston have rolled out a new [COVID19 Threat Level Warning System](#). The Dashboard can be [viewed online along with today's current threat level](#). Here's what the new system means:

- Level 1: STAY HOME - outbreaks are present and worsening and that testing and contact tracing capacity is strained or exceeded
 - What to do: minimize contact with others, avoiding any medium or large gatherings and only visiting permissible businesses that follow public health guidance
- **Level 2: MINIMIZE ALL CONTACTS (Current Level) - significant and uncontrolled level of COVID-19 in Harris County, and that testing and contact tracing capacity is likely sufficient to meet demand**
 - **What to do: minimize contact with others, avoiding any medium or large gatherings and only visiting permissible businesses that follow public health guidance**
- Level 3: STAY VIGILANT - moderate, but controlled level of COVID-19 in Harris County
 - What to do: remain vigilant, but resume contact with others and resume leaving home

- Level 4: Resume Normal Activity - minimal and controlled level of COVID-19 in Harris County; new chains of transmission are limited and quickly broken or a vaccine and/or treatment has been developed and widely deployed
 - What to do: residents may resume normal contact with others unless sick

It was clear from today's press conference that there is little desire to go back to a stay home order. Instead, officials are asking everyone to do their part by wearing a mask, practice social distancing, washing hands often, and staying home when sick. During the Interfaith Ministries call this morning, the Mayor asked faith leaders to "use your influence" and openly practice and promote these protective measures. The more we normalize these best practices, the more effective they will be in our battle with COVID19.

Two recent studies have shown that the [decisions to shut down cities early on](#) in the pandemic have likely prevented 60 million COVID19 infections in the United States, and hundreds of millions more in other parts of the world. As painful as secluding ourselves from one another has been, it proves that it was the right decision.

A study from Cambridge and Greenwich Universities finds that [universal mask wearing could help slow or stop a second wave](#) of infections. The World Health Organization has [updated its recommendations](#) to include wearing fabric masks when out in public.

The World Health Organization has determined that [people are most infectious at the onset of symptoms](#), contradicting other statements that people's ability to shed COVID19 correlates to how severe they are experiencing symptoms. This once again proves that there is still much we don't know about this novel coronavirus.

HISD is considering [year-round school](#) for the 2020-2021 calendar. Here's what that means:

- 182 instructional days for students, an increase of 10 more days.
- 17 possible intersession dates for instruction.
- Five extra minutes per school day, totaling 5,390 above state requirements. This would allow the district time for emergency weather or other closures.
- Two teacher professional development days and three teacher preparation days.
- 187 teacher contract days.

There are still a lot of questions HISD needs to answer before August, like if classes will be in person or online and if school weeks will be 5 days or staggered for students. HISD has indicated that a decision will be announced in four weeks.



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The law firm of Foley & Lardner will be hosting a webinar titled “[10 Issues Non-Profit Organizations Should Be Considering After Three Months of the Pandemic](#)” on June 16th from 3-4 p.m. CT.

Nolan Ryan is asking that you “[don’t be a knuckle head](#)” and wear a mask. The newest PSA from Governor Abbott reminds us that while we are out of the house we still need to wash our hands, practice social distancing, and wear a mask.

Hurricane Season 2020

Project Braes held a virtual public forum yesterday on the construction of the bridge at Hilcroft and Braeswood. You can submit [public comment on the project until June 24th](#). Construction will begin at the end of the month and last about three months. Here is what we can expect:

- Raising the bridge in order to increase the available space below the bridge by 30% to help with flow
- The bridge will be raised by hydraulic jacks 15 inches, both intersections and traffic signals will be rebuilt
- The project will raise and modify the existing bridge to have four 11-foot wide lanes, including a left-turn lane, and 10-foot sidewalks on both sides of the bridge
- There will be partial closures at north and south Braeswood when the intersections are rebuilt, but generally Braeswood should remain open the entire time
- The Hilcroft bridge will be closed to both pedestrian and vehicle traffic, Chimney Rock will be the detour

Security

Today, we held our third JРАН Conversation Starter that covered the new direction of community-wide security in Houston. Dena Marks from the ADL shared the organization’s new vision, ADL Now!, and its shift from security training to a focus on Anti-Semitism and extremism. Brad Orsini from the Secure Community Network spoke about the role SCN will play in Houston. We will send around the recording of today’s webinar in next week’s JРАН email. In the meantime, here are some of the resources that were mentioned:

- Attached is the Low Cost/No Cost security document from SCN
- [Firearms and the Faithful report](#)
- Save the date for July 23rd – our first virtual security training with SCN...more details to come!

In Other News...

It's awards season here at the Federation and this year the [Spotlight is On You](#) (and Aliza, Luis, Dena, Ariel, Fran, and Eileen)! This year's Community Leadership Awards Ceremony is going virtual via Zoom, naturally. Entertainment will be provided by Jewish acapella YouTube sensations, The Maccabeats. Their Jewish holiday song parodies have racked up millions of views on [YouTube](#) with hits like [Dayenu](#), [Latke Recipe](#), and [Sukkos Style](#). If you need me on June 18th, I'll be celebrating our community while jamming to The Maccabeats and definitely not questioning my choice to go to law school over making viral YouTube music videos.

Take care today and I hope you find the joy in the little things today,

Jackie

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