



July 2 AM – Jran Email

Dear Jran Community:

It's July, which makes us officially half-way through 2020. We have six more months left and we still have a lot to do. This is a Presidential election year ([register to vote for the November election here](#), Harris County [early voting for the July primary runoffs has begun](#)) and a Census Year ([fill out the 2020 Census here](#)). We are in the middle of the 2020 marathon and we are getting closer to the finish line. We. Can. Do. This.

There is a lot of anxiety in our community about wanting to go back to our "old normal" while facing the reality of our "new normal." Just when we were starting to breathe a sigh of relief at the idea of opening our congregations, camps, and businesses, we were forced to take a step back and close again. While it seems like we have lost control, there is so much we can accomplish individually and as a community to put the power back in our hands. Here's what we can do:

- Each of us can make the commitment to [wear a mask](#), practice social distancing, and if you are feeling ill to [get tested](#);
- We can teach our children that while schools and camps have closed, we can find enrichment inwards by [donating food](#), clothing and toys to the growing need in our community;
- We can start a calling tree to check in on members of our family or the community that may be in isolation or sick;
- We can support our Jewish-owned restaurants and health care heroes by [ordering meals for medical staff](#);
- We can look for [virtual volunteer opportunities](#) through Volunteer Houston;
- We can contribute to the [Federation's COVID19 Emergency Appeal](#);
- And all of us can [practice self-care](#)—taking time each day to reflect on our blessings, no matter how small.

As Jewish communal leaders, it is up to us to carry on this ever-important work—with grit and determination—for our community. We are at a pivotal time where we need to lead by example and encourage others to do the same. Let's get to it.

COVID19

City of Houston Update

Mayor Turner is urging people to scale back their outings and gatherings to within your own household and to know where other people in your home have been. City parks will be open for exercising but not for congregating. City services are being delayed due to employees testing positive or being forced into quarantine.

All City of Houston events for the month of July, and likely August, will be cancelled or postponed. The Mayor is asking all businesses to voluntarily scale back their reopening for the next three weeks: congregations to go back to virtual worship, office employees to go back to work from home, and restaurants and gyms to go down to 25% occupancy. Mayor Turner joined several other Texas Mayors in [asking that Governor Abbott roll back occupancy](#) for gyms and bowling alleys to 25%.

Dr. David Callender, president and CEO of Memorial Hermann, stated that the **average age of COVID19 patients being admitted to the hospital has dropped from the 50+ group in April to 35 today**. Dr. Callender stated that wearing a mask should pose no health risk. Many in the medical field wear masks for an entire day with no problems. Additionally, a negative COVID19 test is a snapshot in time, so you still need to wear a mask even with a negative result.

Travel

The [State of Texas is reporting](#) an average of 5,000 new cases of COVID19 per day, with Harris County topping the leaderboard. It is estimated that there are over 78,000 active cases of COVID19 in the State and this number is only expected to grow.

Texas is officially a “hot spot” of new coronavirus activity and we are now on the receiving end of travel restrictions and mandatory 14-day quarantine. The Tri-State area covering [New York](#), [New Jersey](#) and [Connecticut](#) have placed [Texans visiting the area on a mandatory self-quarantine](#) upon arrival.

The European Union and several other countries in Europe have [extended their non-essential travel ban](#) for all persons coming from the United States. The travel ban is based on country of residence, not citizenship, so American ex-pats may continue to travel per the rules where they live.

I guess we will have to keep that wanderlust in staycation mode this summer.

Dashboards, Dashboards, Dashboards

Houston continues to report a surge of new cases of COVID19. But here's where it is getting murky. There are a lot of dashboards out there. Johns Hopkins University has the [original dashboard](#). The [State of Texas runs their dashboard](#) through the Texas Health and Human Services Commission. The [SouthEast Texas Regional Advisory Council \(SETRAC\) runs a dashboard](#) for the nine-county Greater Houston area. [Harris County Public Health and Houston Health Department have a dashboard](#). The Texas Medical Center (TMC), which covers all TMC institutions in the nine-county region, has their [integrated dashboard and warning system](#) (which has undergone some controversial updates in the past week). And Harvard Global Health Institute just released its [national dashboard](#). What's confusing, is that these dashboards seem to be reporting different numbers. Here are the confirmed case numbers for Harris County (as of July 1st):

- Johns Hopkins University: 31,422 (matches Harris Public Health, no warning metric system)
- Harvard Global Health: 29,163 (Red: Stay at Home)
- State of Texas dashboard: 30,729 (no warning metric system)
- SETRAC dashboard: 29,276 (no warning metric system)
- Harris Public Health/Houston Health dashboard: 31,422 (matches Johns Hopkins, Red: Stay at Home)
- TMC dashboard: 42,635 (Red: Warning)

The one thing all the dash boards have in common is the sustained sharp increase in new cases for our region. The dashboards with alert metrics are all reporting the highest level of alert for Harris County/Houston. So, whether you are looking at the TMC high end or the Harvard Global Health low end of the numbers, medical experts all agree that this trajectory is not maintainable. If we keep up this growth rate, our hospital system will be unable to meet demand. Now, [how close our medical system is from collapsing has also been muddied recently](#).

Perhaps the question shouldn't be how long until our hospitals and medical professionals buckle from the growing pressure (days vs. weeks), but rather do we want to wait until we get to that point before acting?

Hurricane Season 2020

The American Red Cross is working on actively monitoring hurricane activity this year. The Red Cross will be adjusting its response measures to consider COVID19 health and safety protocols and will be looking to the faith community for support.

Security

Please save the date for our first JРАН Security Training: Countering an Active Threat. This training will take place **on July 23rd at 11 am – 12:30 pm**. Brad Orsini, Senior National Advisor for the Secure Community Network, will train you on how to counter and active threat using best practices. This will be useful for both work and everyday life.

In Other News...(ear buds in, volume up!)

Hamilton will be [released tomorrow on Disney+](#). It is a nice compromise for us Houstonians since the live Broadway Across America performance of *Hamilton* has been postponed. To sing you into this July 4th weekend, here is a [socially distant performance of “Helpless”](#) by the original cast of *Hamilton*, Jimmy Fallon, and *The Roots* using instruments found around the house.

Take care today and I hope you show your American pride by wearing a red, white, and blue mask this weekend,

Jackie

Jackie Fisherman | Director of Government Affairs

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