



Jewish Federation OF GREATER HOUSTON

July 7 PM - JРАН Email

Dear JРАН Community:

There is a lot of ground to cover today, so we will get right to it.

COVID19

The numbers continue to rise in Houston as [COVID19 is spreading at a rapid pace](#) in our region. Over 120 nurses from the New England and New York area have been called into Greater Houston to help our hospital system keep up with the increasing cases. Many of these nurses were on hand in New York City during its peak. Some are here to add relief to Houston-based nurses who need a break and others are here to help staff up additional COVID19 wards in the area. This is welcomed news as the Texas [hospitalization rate for COVID19 has doubled in two weeks](#).

You can look at more localized data on COVID19 by using the [case by Super Neighborhood app](#) from the County's map. The Meyerland Super Neighborhood has 52 active cases per 10,000 people.

The [Texas Education Agency \(TEA\) announced today its guidelines for the fall semester](#). This was highly anticipated as school districts hit pause on their opening plans to wait for TEA's guidance. Here's what TEA stated:

- Daily on-campus learning will be available to all parents who would like their students to learn in school each day
- Health and safety procedures will be in place to support student and teacher safety
- TEA is providing school systems with resources to ensure a strong start. Including:
 - Reimbursement for extra COVID-19-related expenses incurred during the 2019-20 school year;
 - Tens of millions of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) supplies provided to school systems at no cost to Texas schools;
 - Free online, TEKS-aligned learning tools to deliver remote instruction;

TEA has released their [public health planning guidance](#) and updates their [coronavirus page](#) frequently.

Mayor Turner is turning up the heat on businesses that violate the Governor's executive orders—namely mask wearing and overcrowding. In the new "[Wall of Accountability](#)" (formerly known as the "Wall of Shame"), the Mayor is posting the name of businesses that have been cited for violations. It also has a resource area where you can report violators to the City.

Houstonians saw the heartbreak of Rodeo Houston closing early due to COVID19 and now our neighbors to the north will be feeling the same disappointment as the State Fair of Texas made the tough decision to [cancel its 2020 event](#). See you in 2021, Big Tex (and fried Oreos).

On the other hand, the Republican Party of Texas (RPT) has made the decision to move forward with their planned in-person convention in Houston next week. Mayor Turner and the Texas Medical Center have [asked the RPT to go virtual given the current health crisis](#) but political pressure gave way and the convention is moving forward as planned. Many in Houston are concerned about the health and wellbeing of hotel, hospitality, and [restaurant workers](#) as well as having 6,000 or more people from all over the state convene in Houston, a known hot spot. The RPT Convention is the only event scheduled at the George R. Brown that has not postponed or cancelled in 2020. Several sponsors, including the Texas Medical Association, have pulled their sponsorships as a result.

Mayor Turner made it clear that [RPT will have to follow the guidelines, social distancing, and mask order](#) while in town or face the penalties allowed under the Governor's orders. The City will have staff on hand ensuring enforcement.

A company in Houston was selected by the President's "Operation Warp Speed" to fast-track a vaccine for COVID19. The Texas Center for Drug Development, a private medical research firm, is [looking for volunteers for their vaccine trials](#). Volunteers interested in participating can visit houstonfightscovid.com or call (281) 886-3753.

Hurricane Season 2020

Hurricane researchers at Colorado State University's Tropical Weather & Climate Research Institute are continuing to [predict an active 2020 Hurricane Season](#). They have [adjusted their predictions](#) from 19 named storms to 20 with 9 major hurricanes. We have seen 5 named storms as of July 4th. Now, how did the leading tropical storm research facility land in the middle of the Rocky Mountains?



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Security

Please [register for our first JРАН Training on countering an active threat](#). Brad Orsini, senior national advisor for the Secure Community Network, will be presenting on best practices that you will be able to use at work and in everyday life. Brad is the former security director for the Jewish Federation of Greater Pittsburgh where his trainings have been credited in saving lives during the Tree of Life tragedy. A former FBI Special Agent and Captain in the Marines, Brad is uniquely qualified in security training.

[Zoombombing](#) happens when someone gets a hold of your Zoom meeting link, signs in, and makes a remark or posts an inappropriate picture. We have seen three cases of Anti-Semitic Zoombombing in the Houston community, and last week one of our Houston Congregations was attacked via Zoom by a person wearing a hood who made a direct threat against the Rabbi.

To address these incidents, JРАН and the ADL will be hosting a joint Zoombombing training. We will share best practices, how to ensure your Zoom is secure, and what to do if you are a victim. More details to follow.

In Other News...

Masks are all the rage these days and the Federation is encouraging everyone to "[Do a Mitzvah. Wear a Mask.](#)" It's as easy as challah...or tefillin...or putting on a kippah...or spotting your friends in the video. Now go watch the video, share on your Facebook wall, and see how many comments you get from friends from out-of-state that spot someone they know.

Take care today and I hope you do a mitzvah every time you leave the house,

Jackie

Jackie Fisherman | Director of Government Affairs

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