



August 27 PM – Jran Email

Dear Jran Community:

Today, we will go over COVID19 testing trends, the aftermath of Hurricane Laura, and security during High Holidays.

COVID19

The joint [Harris County and City of Houston dashboard](#) continues the downward trend in positive daily growth. Additionally, the epi curve, which measures the level of community spread and infection rates, has not changed as backlogs are released. This is a good sign that early July was likely the peak for our area.

On today's Interfaith Ministries Faith Leaders Call, Dr. Marc Boom, president of Houston Methodist, stated that the data is pointing more towards mask wearing as the most effective way to contain the virus. Dr. Boom stated that he remains optimistic that if we continue social distancing and mask wearing through the Labor Day weekend, we can expect to see schools reopen to in-person learning in September and October. However, if we let our guard down and cases spike two to three weeks after Labor Day, this may set back in-person learning for the fall.

Dr. Boom also stated that the Texas Medical Center's [three metrics that measure](#) our area's ability to control the virus continue to look good. We still have a ways to go before declaring victory but we are in the right direction.

Medical experts, the Mayor, and the County Judge are all encouraging people to [get tested at any of the free test sites](#) around the city. Testing is the best way for the medical community to get a pulse of where the virus is in our area. The Merfish testing center is open Monday-Friday and results typically come in 2-5 days. Even if you do not show any symptoms, it will help to get tested anyway since we know what many people are asymptomatic spreaders of COVID19. So, do a mitzvah and wear a mask and get a test!

Hurricane Season 2020

Laura has now been [downgraded from hurricane status to tropical storm](#) as it moves north across Louisiana and Arkansas. The Federation is monitoring the situation to our east with utmost concern and we will update the community if we learn of needs that warrant our assistance.

This served a good reminder that we are in the middle of what has been predicated to be an active hurricane season. September is an active month for the Atlantic. We need to continue to remain vigilant and listen to trusted sources when it comes to weather.

Security

The Secure Community Network (SCN) is holding a series of “High Holidays Safety and Security Preparedness Webinars” in September. You must register in advance to attend. Here is a list of their upcoming resources:

- September 2nd: [Safety and Security Considerations for Outdoor Services and Gatherings](#)
- September 9th: [Personal Safety for Lay & Professional Leadership During the High Holidays](#)
- September 16th: [Cyber Preparedness for the High Holidays](#)

Additionally, SCN has a informative report called [Firearms and the Faithful](#). It is a thoughtful approach for those considering using congregants and lay leaders as part of their security strategy.

In Other News...

It's 2020, so we know flexibility and adaptability are key to doing, well...pretty much everything this year. Back in the spring, Dr. Peter Hotez stated that everyone should expect to celebrate a birthday during the pandemic so we should all plan accordingly...and the Jewish new year is no exception. As we look forward to celebrating Rosh Hashanah, congregations and shuls across the globe are putting into place ways to keep us safe as we pray and celebrate. You can expect to see Hazzan's in plexiglass boxes, in-person worship outdoors, congregants wearing masks, shofars wearing masks...wait, what?

That's right, this year [your shofar will be sporting 2020's most popular accessory, a face mask!](#) And that, my friends, is 2020.

Take care and I hope you find time to get tested this weekend,

Jackie

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