



September 3 PM – Jran Email

Dear Jran Community:

Today, we will cover how viruses spread in the air, updates from the Texas Medical Center, the City's antibody testing survey, why you should be skeptical of rushed vaccines, a PPE grant from Harris County, how you can name your neighborhood drains, and the last couple of High Holiday security webinars.

COVID19

This weekend is Labor Day, which is typically marked by barbeques, pool parties, and large social gatherings...all big no-no's during the current global pandemic. The Mayor and County Judge are urging everyone to please celebrate this year safely by wearing a mask, avoiding large gatherings, and keeping at least six feet between yourself and others. Why is this so important? Glad you asked! NPR's global health and development reporter, Pien Huang, [explains how COVID19 spreads in the air](#) and why it's critical that you take precautions so you don't catch the virus. It's been a tough year of social distancing and this weekend may seem tempting. However, as we have learned from other holidays like 4th of July and Memorial Day, the weeks following are typically met with a spike in new cases and a strain on our hospital system. So, this Labor Day weekend, [let's all take a note from Burning Man](#), and do our festivities safely, virtually, and at home.

The Texas Medical Center is reporting a slight up-tick in new hospital and ICU admissions. TMC's [Phase 1 ICU capacity is nearly full](#) and we might see our hospital system swing back into Phase 2 shortly if we continue this trend. The [TMC dashboard is a mix of good news and bad news](#). First the good news: daily new cases and the test positivity rate are down compared to last week. TMC is reporting 5.4% positivity rate—hovering just above that 5% we are all looking for before we open schools. Don't celebrate just yet...the effective reproduction rate has gone just above 1.0 to 1.09, which indicates that mitigation measures such as masks and social distancing are waning. Dr. James McDeavitt, president of Baylor College of Medicine, warns that [something is going on with the numbers in Houston](#) that the medical community is having a hard time explaining. It is worth reading Dr. McDeavitt's message to the end as a sober reminder that holiday weekends during the pandemic can have devastating effects.

To get a better handle on COVID19 in Houston, the Mayor's office has teamed up with the Centers for Disease Control to [conduct an antibody testing survey](#) in Houston. Workers from Houston Health and the fire department will be going door-to-door to conduct the antibody survey and officials are asking that if you receive a request that you please participate.

Houston Health also has a one-stop website for resources related to the pandemic. You can visit [ProtectTheH.com](#) for information on testing, mental health, and emergency operations. Additionally, Harris County has a [one-time PPE request](#) for all commercial and non-profit entities in the

area. This includes touchless thermometers, face masks, and gloves. To apply you will need to fill out a PPE request form.

Dr. David Persse, during today's Interfaith Ministries Faith Leaders call, cautioned against any promises of a rushed vaccine. There are reports in the news about a possible vaccine in time for the November elections, however scientists and leading doctors are finding out about it the same way we are—through the papers. If this is the case, we will likely see an "[emergency authorization](#)" of a vaccine which allows the FDA the ability to authorize the use of a drug or vaccine in the setting of a declared emergency. Basically, they will decide that the potential benefits outweigh the potential risks. A vaccine "approval" requires specific safety and effectiveness standards to be met, which is a much more stringent process. A few weeks ago, I went over the backlash of a [rushed 1976 Swine Flu vaccine](#) and how it eroded the public's trust in vaccines. FDA approval is a strict process by design.

Hurricane Season 2020

We all breathed a big sigh of relief as we missed Hurricane Laura's devastation. It served as a wake up call that the weather can change on a moment's notice and we need to continue to be vigilant, have a kit, and make a plan this hurricane season. Another thing we can do is participate in Houston's "[Adopt a Drain](#)" program. Through this initiative you get to clear leaves and debris from your drain at least four times a year and as a thank you the City will allow you to name your drain! Don't let this opportunity *waste away!*

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 9th: [Personal Safety for Lay & Professional Leadership During the High Holidays](#)
- September 16th: [Cyber Preparedness for the High Holidays](#)

Additionally, SCN has an 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...

Here's a [video of Cats Playing Dominos](#). 28 million views can't be wrong—no further explanation necessary. Enjoy the long weekend!

Take care today and I hope you spend this Labor Day weekend setting up an elaborate Rube Goldberg for your pets,

Jackie

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