



November 5 PM – JРАН Email

Dear JРАН Community:

Today, we will cover COVID19 data trends, how to create your “holiday bubble,” ways to entertain your teens and tweens with Houston Public Library, tropical depression Eta, and the unexpectedly (but much welcomed) quiet election night at Jewish polling locations.

COVID19

The data from our area reveals that we are seeing an increase in new cases, but not a “spike” like we saw last July. The [Texas Medical Center dashboard](#) is reporting an effective reproductive rate of 1.10 which is slightly lower than last week’s 1.13. This means the virus is spreading in our community. The current test positivity rate is 4.3% for TMC institutions compared to last week’s 4.5%. We are under the 5% threshold which indicates that testing is reaching a sufficient portion of the population. TMC is reporting 673 new cases, compared to last week’s 643. And TMC institutions admitted 125 new COVID patients per day, compared to last week’s 102.

The [Harris County dashboard](#) looks much the same as last week. We have reached Orange Level in hospital usage (11.3%) and new cases trends (-4 per day), but we are still red when it comes to the 14-day hospitalization trend (flat), total new cases per day (514), and positivity rate (8.5%).

The Episcopal Health Foundation has released the findings from the [2020 Texas COVID-19 Survey](#). This study looked at mental health, healthcare, and vaccine views. Overall, most people plan to get a flu vaccine this year and about 44% indicated they will get a COVID19 vaccine when available. Stress is up in our area and about one-third of residents have lost insurance at some point during the pandemic.

Dr. James McDeavitt gave an update to faith leaders today during the Interfaith Ministries/Greater Houston Partnership briefing. Dr. McDeavitt stated that for the most part, schools are not super spreaders. While there have been isolated cases among students and staff and a handful of breakouts in extracurricular activities (mostly sports), the hospitals are not seeing a surge of new cases due to schools reopening. A growing number of doctors and mental health professionals are encouraging parents to send their children to in-person school, particularly if your child is struggling academically or socially in a virtual setting.

Dr. McDeavitt also opined that locking down and isolating ourselves is no longer the answer. The burnout from 7 months of social distancing plus the approaching holidays may lead to people just giving up altogether with CDC recommendations. Dr. McDeavitt turned a case study from the “NBA Bubble” into a possible way to celebrate the holidays with friends and family: [create a “holiday bubble.”](#) He

makes several disclaimers (it will take commitment, planning, and the risk is not zero) before going into his "[Holiday Bubble Checklist](#)."

In order to create virtual content, Houston Public Library has created a podcast, "[Chapter One with HPL](#)." You can listen to others or create your own podcasts to share with friends and family.

Hurricane Season 2020

Tropical depression Eta is expected to make its way over Cuba this weekend and head toward the Gulf of Mexico next week. It is too soon to say what its impacts will be for our region, so we will continue to monitor it next week. Basically, TBD on Eta.

Security

Eric Fingerhut, president and CEO of the Jewish Federations of North America is reporting that there were [no known incidents of hate, extremism, or violence at any Jewish polling location](#) during the November election.

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

Last month, the Jewish Federations of North America hosted their very first Virtual General Assembly. Kicking off the event was a mash up of Beatles songs and Beatles-inspired Israeli music by the Maccabeats. Check out their video of "[Come Together/Lu Yehi](#)."

Take care and I hope you find time to come together in a safe way this holiday season,

Jackie

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