

**Mission:**

To protect, promote & improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county & community efforts.



**Ron DeSantis**  
Governor

**Scott A. Rivkees, MD**  
State Surgeon General

**Vision:** To be the Healthiest State in the Nation

# 09/25/2020 Local COVID19 Update

**Weekly Update: 9/18 - 09/24/20**  
(updated every other Friday)

Positivity this week: 13%\*

Positive tests this week: 23\*\*

Total tests this week: 173

Deaths reported this week: 0

\*Positivity = the number of people who test positive in a week divided by all the people tested that week. Excludes people who have previously tested positive and all positive and negative inmate tests.

**State Positivity: 4%**

**Median Age in Franklin: 39**

**Totals Since the Beginning:**

Unduplicated positive tests (rapid antigen and PCR): 614

Positive inmates: 321

Positive long term care (staff and residents): 4

Overall hospitalizations: 8

Deaths: 3

Total Tests: 4,938

Negative tests: 4,313

\*\* Disclaimer: We saw a slight rise, but these individuals are following isolation and close contacts are in quarantine.

Here are the Franklin County testing numbers as of 2:30pm today: (see above)

For the full county COVID-19 profile report please visit:  
[http://ww11.doh.state.fl.us/comm/partners/covid19\\_report\\_archive/county\\_reports\\_latest.pdf](http://ww11.doh.state.fl.us/comm/partners/covid19_report_archive/county_reports_latest.pdf)

Available hospital bed capacity, including ICU capacity in neighboring counties, can be found using this link.  
<https://bi.ahca.myflorida.com/t/ABICC/views/Public/HospitalBedsCounty?:isGuestRedirectFromVizportal=y&:embed=y>

For Franklin County COVID-19 updates straight to your phone: text FranklinCV19 to 888777.  
Florida Department of Health in Franklin County: (850) 653-2111  
Florida Department of Health in Gulf County: 850-227-1276  
There is also a hotline available at 1 (866) 779-6121 or email [COVID-19@flhealth.gov](mailto:COVID-19@flhealth.gov).

Follow the [CDC.gov](https://www.cdc.gov) website for the latest guidance on COVID-19 and check out Floridahealth.gov to keep up with state-specific updates.

## **WHAT YOU'LL FIND IN TODAY'S UPDATE:**

- Franklin County COVID-19 Profile Report 09/25/2020. (See link on page 1)
- Updated County Health Department Message (A Message From Your CHD, page 2)
- Governor DeSantis announces Florida moving into Phase 3 of reopening plan (see below, page 6)
- Post Hurricane Sally: Small Business Emergency Bridge Loan Program (see below, page 2)
- Franklin County COVID19 Relief Fund to help those financially impacted by COVID-19 (see page 2)

## **A MESSAGE FROM YOUR COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT**

**We will be changing the frequency of COVID19 updates email.** In order to/improve efficiency and provide you with the most relevant information we will be issuing updates every other week, starting this Friday.

We're here to help our community navigate through these difficult times. For daily updates, data, and local counts check out [Florida's COVID-19 dashboard](#). For questions about COVID-19 testing, including scheduling appointments and requesting results, please call our local office in Franklin at (850) 653-2111 or in Gulf at (850) 227-1276.

**Get your Flu Shot! And remember to Vaccinate before Halloween.** The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends everyone six months and older get a flu vaccine every year. This year, the CDC underscores that flu vaccine is more important than ever to protect yourself and the people around you, and to help reduce the strain on health care systems responding to Covid-19. For more information, go to <http://www.floridahealth.gov/newsroom/2020/09/090920-flu-prevention.article.html>

**In the aftermath of Hurricane Sally, Governor Ron DeSantis Activates Florida Small Business Loan Program.** The Florida Small Business Emergency Bridge Loan program supports small businesses affected by Hurricane Sally. By providing short-term, zero-interest loans to small businesses impacted by the storm. The application period runs through November 14, 2020, or until the available funds are expended. For more information visit: <https://www.floridadisaster.org/news-media/news/20200924--governor-ron-desantis-announces-fema-approval-of-major-disaster-declaration/>

**COVID19 relief funding is here to help.** The past 6 months have been hard on our community. With so many factors affecting our economy many residents have struggled to stay afloat. If you or someone you know has, lost a job, facing eviction, foreclosure, or need assistance paying utility bills due to COVID-19, the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act may be able to help.

The Franklin County Board of County Commissioners through the Franklin County S.H.I.P. Program has received Corona Virus Relief Funds in the amount of \$175,000. For an application or more information please call Lori Switzer-Mills or Teresa Kelley at 653-8199, email: [Franklincountyship@yahoo.com](mailto:Franklincountyship@yahoo.com) or come by the office located at The Fort Coombs Armory 66-4th Street, Apalachicola.

## **QUARTANTINE/ISOLATION FACTS**

**The quarantine period is important.** We need close contacts to a positive case to quarantine for 14 days from the date of their exposure to the positive individual. Getting a test that is negative during the quarantine period does not stop the clock. We have seen many individuals develop infection on the second week of quarantine, so it is really important to stay quarantined for the full 14-day period. Household quarantine can be a little more stretched since it can be very difficult for a positive individual to properly isolate from everyone else. If you live in the same household as a positive case unable to properly isolate, you need to quarantine while the person is sick and once this individual is no longer infectious, that's when your quarantine 14 period will start.

**I tested positive for COVID19. When can I be around others (no longer infectious)?** If you tested positive for COVID19, you need to stay at home and isolate per the guidance provided by public health officials. If you think or know you had COVID-19, and had symptoms, you can be with others after at least 10 days since symptoms first appeared AND at least 24 hours has passed with no fever without fever-reducing medication AND symptoms have improved. If you tested positive for COVID-19 but had no symptoms, you can be with others after 10 days have passed since your test. If you develop symptoms after testing positive, follow the guidance above that includes fever and symptoms improving. Follow this link to stay tuned on updates: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/end-home-isolation.html>

### **Some Masks Protect Better than Others**

There was a recent study published by Duke University about mask effectiveness. Some masks work better than others. The usage of more effective masks can make a difference in reducing the transmission of this virus. This study looks at respiratory droplets that people are exposed to or that they expel into the air. This study has been highlighted on nightly news outlets, like this one: <https://www.cnbc.com/2020/08/11/study-bandanas-and-neck-gaiters-not-effective-as-surgical-face-masks.html>

A copy of the full study can be found using this link: <https://advances.sciencemag.org/content/early/2020/08/07/sciadv.abd3083>

### **CLOTH FACE COVERS/MASK**

#### **Why wear the mask in public?**

**Answer:** My cloth face covering protects you. Your cloth face covering protects me. Although not a 100% guarantee, the use of masks has been proven using actual case investigations to dramatically reduce the spread of the virus. People who are infected can spread the virus before they develop symptoms or in the absence of symptoms. Wearing a cloth face covering may help prevent the spread of the virus by people who are infected and do not know it. Use of cloth face coverings continues to be a recommendation long-term prevention measures such as vaccines are being developed.

Cloth face coverings do not replace other protective measures. CDC still recommends that you stay at least 6 feet away from other people (social distancing), wash your hands frequently, and avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth....and your face covering. Cloth face coverings should not be placed on children under age 2.

#### **If you or someone you love needs a cloth mask, please call 850-340-3016.**

The CDC recommends wearing cloth face coverings in public settings where other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain, especially in areas of significant community-based transmission.

For information on how you can make a facemask at home, visit <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover.html> and watch this video <https://youtu.be/tPx1yqvJgf4>.

### **TESTING**

If you suspect you might have COVID-19, please do not travel here. Please get a COVID-19 test (nasal swab for active infection) in your community and know your results before you arrive. Stay home when you are sick and follow CDC guidelines. Visitors are also responsible for helping to keep our communities safe and healthy. Call your health care provider first or if you are symptomatic to determine the need for testing. If a person thinks they have COVID-19, they should call their health care provider before going to their office so the provider can take precautions to prevent exposing other people. In some cases, they are going to meet you in the parking lot. It's just a precaution. We are really trying to keep our healthcare workers safe. Other patients safe. Review your signs, symptoms and travel history with your physician. Your provider is going to evaluate you for possible causes

## COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT EXPANDED TESTING PLAN

The Florida Department of Health offers FREE COVID-19 testing. Please call (850) 653-2111 to make an appointment.

## WEEMS OFFERS TESTING

Weems Medical Centers offers active COVID-19 and COVID-19 antibody testing. Free for uninsured patients and zero copay for patients with coverage. An **official provider order** is required for all non-Weems clients. To make an appointment for testing, individuals should call the East Clinic at (850) 697-2345 or West Clinic at (850) 653-1525.

## ANTIBODY TESTING

To learn about antibody testing, see [http://ww11.doh.state.fl.us/comm/\\_partners/action/antibody\\_testing.pdf](http://ww11.doh.state.fl.us/comm/_partners/action/antibody_testing.pdf) or see visit <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/testing/serology-overview.html> for CDC information about antibody testing.

## COVID-19 REINFECTION

Available information from the CDC shows immunity for 90 days. There are no confirmed reports to date of a person being reinfected with COVID-19 within 3 months of initial infection.

A person who has had and recovered from COVID-19 may have low levels of virus in their bodies for up to 3 months after diagnosis. This means that if the person who has recovered from COVID-19 is retested within 3 months of initial infection, they may continue to have a positive test result, even though they are not spreading COVID-19. Meaning, they are no longer infectious to others. However, additional research is ongoing.

Therefore, if a person who has recovered from COVID-19 has new symptoms of COVID-19, the person may need an evaluation for reinfection, especially if the person has had close contact with someone infected with COVID-19. The person should isolate and contact a healthcare provider to be evaluated for other causes of their symptoms, and possibly retested.

More information can be found here: [https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/duration-isolation.html?CDC\\_AA\\_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fcommunity%2Fstrategy-discontinue-isolation.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/duration-isolation.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fcommunity%2Fstrategy-discontinue-isolation.html)

## MENTAL HEALTH

COVID-19 have you feeling...STRESSED/ANXIOUS/DEPRESSED/UNSURE? NEED SUPPORT? CALL 850-270-8911, available 9-5pm EST. If you are in need of immediate mental health services call one of the agencies below available 24/7:

- National Suicide Prevention Hotline: 1-800-273-TALK (8255)
- SAMSA Disaster Helpline: 1-800-985-5990 or text TalkWithUs to 66746 or the Crisis Text Line: Text "HOME" to 741-741
- Florida Blue, in partnership with New Directions Behavioral Health, is providing a free emotional support resource for all Floridians even if not covered by Florida Blue insurance. Any Floridian – even if uninsured or insured by another plan – can call 833-848-1762 for support in managing feelings of stress, anxiety, grief or fear related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

## WORKPLACE RESOURCES

We get asked a lot about daily health screenings for employers. The CDC has updated strategies and recommendations for employers responding to COVID-19, including those seeking to resume normal or phased business operations. Recommendations to [Prepare Your Small Business and Employees for the Effects of](#)

COVID-19 The questions were modified for the adult workforce. In addition to regular temperature checks, the follow questions can be asked to employees:

#### **Daily Health Questionnaire**

1. Do you or anyone in your household have any of the following symptoms? (fever 100.4 or above, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, chills, muscle pain, sore throat, congestion, runny nose, nausea, vomiting, new loss of taste or smell)
2. Have you or anyone in the household traveled outside of the country or to any highly affected areas in the United States in the past 14 days?
3. Have you had direct contact (within 6 feet for more than 15 minutes) with anyone who has tested positive with COVID-19 within the last 2 weeks?
4. Is there anyone in your household under instructions to self-isolate or quarantine due to COVID-19?

#### **RURAL DEVELOPMENT**

There are several resources available for rural residents and business coping with the impact of COVID-19. Please visit the Rural Development Coronavirus Response page: <https://www.rd.usda.gov/coronavirus>

#### **REEMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE**

We encourage any Floridian whose employment has been negatively impacted as a result of COVID-19 to visit FloridaJobs.org and click on Reemployment Assistance Service Center to learn more about the program and watch a short video on how to apply. Click <http://www.floridajobs.org/Reemployment-Assistance-Service-Center/reemployment-assistance/claimants/apply-for-benefits> for a direct link to instructions on how to apply for Reemployment Assistance. Select the hyperlink to download and view the [http://floridajobs.org/docs/default-source/reemployment-assistance-center/new-individual-faq-includes-cares-act-final.pdf?sfvrsn=5f2547b0\\_14](http://floridajobs.org/docs/default-source/reemployment-assistance-center/new-individual-faq-includes-cares-act-final.pdf?sfvrsn=5f2547b0_14)

If you can't apply by email you can pick up a paper application and submit it by mail. Below are the following pick up locations for paper applications in Franklin County. For more information you can contact: Career Source Gulf Coast at 850-653-4981. The application will be located in a box outside each building.

Apalachicola – CareerSource #1 Bay Ave Apalachicola, FL

Eastpoint – Ard's Service Station – 407 US Highway 98 Eastpoint, FL

Carrabelle City Hall – 206 Highway 98 E Carrabelle, FL

For a guide to frequently asked questions regarding Re-employment Assistance, visit

[http://www.floridajobs.org/Reemployment-Assistance-Service-Center/reemployment-](http://www.floridajobs.org/Reemployment-Assistance-Service-Center/reemployment-assistance/claimants/claimant-faqs-new)

[assistance/claimants/claimant-faqs-new](http://www.floridajobs.org/Reemployment-Assistance-Service-Center/reemployment-assistance/claimants/claimant-faqs-new)). For information regarding assistance with utilities, rent/mortgages, food pantries, and other local disaster assistance, visit <https://www.211.org/>

#### **FRANKLIN/GULF/BAY COUNTIES:**

Catholic Charities Financial Emergency/Hardship: (850) 763-0475

1. Call First Monday of each month after 9am for screenings
2. An initial screening will take place on the phone to complete the application process and receive an appointment. Proof of need will be required: past due utility bill, proof of check stub from place of employment (before and after date affected).

#### **FOOD DISTRIBUTION**

For a list of youth feeding program sites near you dial 2-1-1.

#### **TRAVEL RECOMMENDATIONS**

Cases of coronavirus disease (COVID-19) have been reported in all states, and some areas are experiencing community spread of the disease. Travel increases your chances of getting and spreading COVID-19.

CDC recommends you stay home as much as possible, especially if your trip is not essential, and practice social distancing especially if you are at higher risk of severe illness. Don't travel if you are sick or travel with someone who is sick. For more information, visit: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/travel-in-the-us.html>

### **GOVERNOR UPDATES:**

To see all of Gov. DeSantis Executive Orders regarding COVID-19, visit: <https://www.flgov.com/covid-19/>.

#### **PHASE 3: PLAN FOR FLORIDA'S RECOVERY**

On September 25, 2020 Gov. DeSantis announced that Florida will move to Phase Three of the reopening plan effective immediately. Restaurants will no longer have capacity limitations despite local regulations. Bars, pubs and nightclubs can also operate at full capacity with limited social distancing protocols, according to the plan. Gyms and fitness centers can also operate at full capacity. The full order to come.

To view the Governor's original plan for Phase 3, visit: <https://www.flgov.com/wp-content/uploads/covid19/Taskforce%20Report.pdf>

#### **DBPR REOPENS BARS**

Beginning Monday, September 14, 2020 the Department of Business and Professional Regulation will allow alcohol vendors to operate pursuant to Phase 2 of Florida's Safe. Smart. Step-by-Step Plan for Recovery. For details or to view the full press release, visit: [Bars Reopening](#).

#### **GOVERNOR ANNOUNCES RELAUNCH OF HURRICANE MICHAEL HOMEBUYER PROGRAM**

On August 17, 2020 Governor Ron DeSantis announced the relaunch of the Hurricane Michael Homebuyer Program. For more information, please visit: <https://www.flgov.com/2020/08/17/governor-ron-desantis-announces-relaunch-of-hurricane-michael-homebuyer-program/>

#### **EXECUTIVE ORDER NUMBER 20-192**

On August 5, 2020, Gov. DeSantis extended EO 20-68, as extended by EO 20-112, 20-139 and 20-166, should read as follows: The Department of Business and Professional Regulation shall ensure all restaurants implement employee screening protocols pursuant to guidance developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. [https://www.flgov.com/wp-content/uploads/orders/2020/EO\\_20-192.pdf](https://www.flgov.com/wp-content/uploads/orders/2020/EO_20-192.pdf)

#### **PHASE 2: PLAN FOR FLORIDA'S RECOVERY**

On June 3, 2020 Gov. DeSantis announced Phase 2: Safe. Smart. Step-by-step. Plan for Florida's Recovery. To view this order, visit: [https://www.flgov.com/wp-content/uploads/orders/2020/EO\\_20-139.pdf](https://www.flgov.com/wp-content/uploads/orders/2020/EO_20-139.pdf). To see Gov DeSantis presentation on Florida's plan for recovery visit <https://bit.ly/GovDeSantisPresentation>. For more information visit: <https://www.flgov.com/wp-content/uploads/covid19/Phase%202.jpg>.

#### **UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION**

On, Thursday, April 16, 2020 Governor DeSantis issued Executive Order 20-104 which suspends the requirement that Floridians must recertify reemployment assistance status every two weeks.

### **LOCAL UPDATES:**

#### **FRANKLIN COUNTY SHIP PROGRAM COVID RELIEF FUNDS**

The Franklin County Board of County Commissioners through the Franklin County S.H.I.P. Program will be receiving Corona Virus Relief Funds in the amount of \$175,000. Application packets will be available on August 13, 2020. For an application or more information please call Lori Switzer-Mills or Teresa Kelley at 653-8199, email:

[Franklincountyship@yahoo.com](mailto:Franklincountyship@yahoo.com) or come by the office located at The Fort Coombs Armory 66-4th Street, Apalachicola.

### HURRICANE MICHAEL HOUSING RECOVERY PROGRAM

Florida Housing offers low 30-yr fixed interest rate first mortgages along with up to \$15,000 in down payment assistance and closing cost assistance for programs qualified homebuyers. For more information, please visit [www.floridahousing.org](http://www.floridahousing.org) then select “Homebuyer Programs Wizard”.

### PLEDGE TO PROTECT



Pledge to Protect is a voluntary program in which Franklin County tourism businesses commit to clean and healthy standards for their guests and employees to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Visit Pledge to Protect at:

<https://www.floridasforgottencoast.com/pledgetoprotect/>

By taking the Pledge to Protect, businesses are committing to:

- Proper Use of Personal Protective Equipment
- Routine Cleaning and Disinfecting of Surfaces and Equipment
- Practicing Social Distancing and Minimized Contact
- Enforcing Any Sick Employees to Stay Home

### DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONAL REGULATION

Effective immediately, DBPR is suspending on premises consumption of alcohol at bars statewide. To read the full order, please visit: [http://www.myfloridalicense.com/dbpr/os/documents/EO\\_2020-09.pdf](http://www.myfloridalicense.com/dbpr/os/documents/EO_2020-09.pdf)

### HEALTH DEPARTMENT

The Franklin County Health Department has resumed full clinic services. This includes annual physical exams, well woman exams, Florida Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program, other routine appointments and COVID-19 testing. Some services will continue to be done curbside or over the phone to decrease unnecessary exposure. Please call (850) 653-2111 to schedule an appointment! Please do not bring visitors with you to your appointments.

**Florida Department of Health issues Public Health Advisory:** The Dept. of Health recommends all individuals should wear masks in any setting where social distancing is not possible unless a child is under the age of two, encourage elderly and vulnerable populations to limit interactions outside of the home, and urges all individuals to refrain from participating in gatherings of more than 10 people. This advisory serves to update the Public Health Advisories filed on March 25, 2020, and June 20, 2020.” For more information please visit: <http://www.floridahealth.gov/newsroom/2020/07/072420-1446-covid19.pr.html>

### COUNTY CLERK & COURTHOUSE OFFICES

Offices within the main courthouse will remain open to the public for critical, essential services only. Please call (850) 653-8861 before you visit the courthouse to see how they may help you remotely. Visit [www.franklincountyflorida.com](http://www.franklincountyflorida.com) or call the Planning and Building office at (850) 653-9783 for more details.

## **CITY GOVERNMENTS**

The City of Carrabelle has issued a proclamation encouraging the use of facial coverings (mask) in all public buildings and establishments. The Carrabelle City Hall lobby and City buildings are CLOSED to public access until further notice. The Carrabelle City parks are now open however playgrounds and public restrooms will remain closed until further notice.

The City of Apalachicola has an emergency proclamation mandating [Facial Coverings](#) within local businesses and establishments. City offices are open for in-person visits from 8:00a to 12:00p. Residents/customers must continue to call or email for business occurring after 12:00p. Call (850) 653-9319 for more details and (850) 653-6845 for after hours.

## **ASCENSION SACRED HEART**

Online urgent care is available through Ascension Online Care at a discounted \$20 with the code HOME. You can have a video visit with a doctor without leaving your home. No insurance required. Visit <http://ascension.org/onlinecare> to start your visit.

## **SUPPORTING CHILDREN THROUGH THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

COVID-19 has upended children's daily lives, resulting in added stress and uncertainty. Studies show that adversity during childhood, including adversity stemming from natural disasters, can have lasting impacts on children's social emotional health. Fortunately, families can take steps to support and protect children's emotional well-being during the COVID-19 crisis. For more information visit the Nat'l Institute for Children's Health Quality site at <https://bit.ly/2JFXCM6>.

**The Germ that Wears a Crown: A Story About the Coronavirus:** This is a story, coloring & activity book from FSU Center for Child Stress & Health to help children cope with COVID-19. The book teaches children about the virus, social distancing and how to express and manage strong emotions. Visit <http://fsustress.org/ebook.html> to download a free copy!

## **STAYING INFORMED:**

To get the latest information, visit [FloridaHealth.gov](http://FloridaHealth.gov) and follow on Social Media:

Florida Department of Health: [Twitter @HealthyFla](#) -or- [Facebook Florida Department of Health \(DOH\)](#)

Franklin County Florida Emergency Management: [Facebook Franklin County Florida Emergency Management](#)

Gulf/Franklin County Community Health Improvement Partners: [Facebook Gulf/Franklin County Community Health Improvement Partners](#)