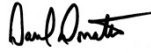




## Town of Palm Beach Fire-Rescue



TO: Kirk Blouin, Town Manager

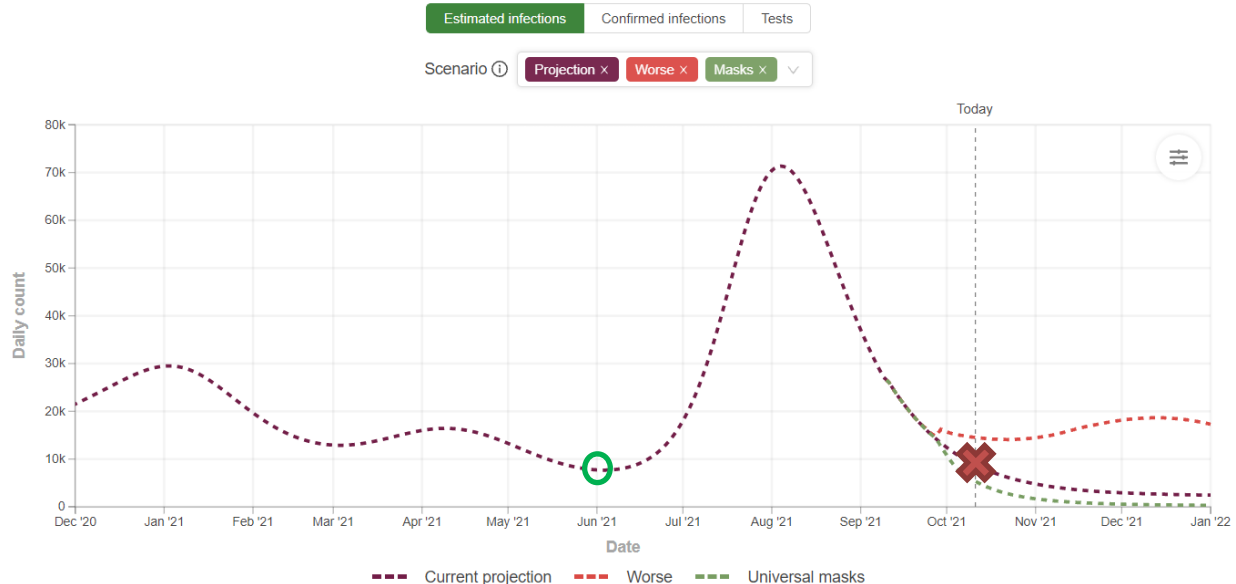
FROM: Darrel Donatto, Fire Rescue Chief 

SUBJECT: October 2021 Update on COVID-19 pandemic

DATE: October 11, 2021

We are coming out of the worst surge in COVID-19 infection and positivity rates that we have seen yet, and the great news is that we are coming out of that surge almost as rapidly as we entered.

### ESTIMATED COVID-19 INFECTION IN FLORIDA



Data from: <https://covid19.healthdata.org/united-states-of-america/florida?view=infections-testing&tab=trend&test=infections>

In June 2021, we saw positivity rates below 3% in Palm Beach County. Today, Palm Beach County's new case positivity rate is at 5% and likely will continue to drop.

More good news is that the hospital bed availability within Palm Beach County has improved significantly from last month. With adult ICU bed availability at 7% and total hospital bed availability at 13%.

Since June 2021, we have seen a significant increase in vaccinations within Palm Beach County, increasing from 58% to 74% of the 12-year-old and up population. Likewise, since June 2021, we have seen a significant number of new infections, which should result in some degree of acquired immunity, growing from 11% of the population to 17% of the Palm Beach County population having been infected. Only about 9% of the Palm Beach County residents are without some form of immunity. Of course, there are still breakthrough infections of those with

immunity, but they occur far less often and are far less severe than infections of those without any form of immunity.

We still have some people who have not been infected and who have not been vaccinated (9%), thus we still have people who are very susceptible to the disease. Over the months and years ahead, I suspect most of those without acquired or vaccinated immunity, will eventually get infected. But, with fewer people to spread the disease, it will take longer for the disease to spread, and thus we should expect to see a continued slow rate of COVID-19 infections here in Palm Beach County, but not virus elimination.

We should be very concerned about the introduction of new variants, particularly from areas of the world with low vaccination rates. One of these new variants could evade the current vaccine-derived immunity, and any infection acquired immunity, thus posing a severe threat and starting a new COVID infection surge all over again.

For those who are vaccinated, the likelihood of the need for a vaccine booster appears high. Last month, the CDC approved several groups to receive the Pfizer vaccine booster if it has been at least six months since their original Pfizer vaccine completion:

- People 65 years and older and residents in long-term care settings should receive a booster shot of Pfizer-BioNTech's COVID-19 vaccine,
- People aged 50–64 years with underlying medical conditions should receive a booster shot of Pfizer-BioNTech's COVID-19 vaccine,
- People aged 18–49 years with underlying medical conditions may receive a booster shot of Pfizer-BioNTech's COVID-19, and
- People aged 18-64 years who are at increased risk for COVID-19 exposure and transmission because of occupational or institutional setting may receive a booster shot of Pfizer-BioNTech's COVID-19, based on their individual benefits and risks.

Both Moderna and Johnson & Johnson have submitted requests for emergency use authorization of their booster shots of the COVID vaccines, and guidance for these booster shots is expected to be released before the end of October. If the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine booster becomes available, and if the Town can obtain the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine booster, Fire-Rescue will offer it to the community.

For those infected by COVID-19, or those exposed to someone who is positive with COVID-19, the Town is offering monoclonal antibody treatment (Regeneron) to Town residents and Town employees and their families. Monoclonal antibody therapy helps prevent severe symptoms from developing in those who are exposed or infected with COVID-19. To date, we have administered monoclonal antibody therapy to 33 people.

Residents can call 561-227-7092 to set up an appointment for a Fire-Rescue crew to come to their home to administer the monoclonal antibody treatment.

It is important to remember that monoclonal antibodies are not a replacement for vaccination. Everyone is highly encouraged to get a COVID-19 vaccine. Getting vaccinated helps stop the spread of infection. It significantly reduces hospitalizations and deaths, and it helps prevent new variants from forming.