

**OFFICE OF THE CITY COUNCIL**

**RESEARCH DIVISION**

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**CITY COUNCIL UPDATE BY UF HEALTH JACKSONVILLE**

**COVID-19 EMERGENCY RESPONSE**

**Remote meeting via teleconference**

**September 3, 2020**

**10:00 a.m.**

**Location:** Remote meeting via teleconference

**In attendance:**

Council Members Ferraro, Freeman, and Cumber (other council members may have been listening on the call but did not identify themselves as present)

**Also**: Dr. Leon Haley – CEO, UF Health Jacksonville; State Senator Aaron Bean – UF Health; Mayor Elaine Brown – Neptune Beach; State Senator Audrey Gibson; State Representative Cord Byrd; State Representative Jason Fischer; DCPS Superintendent Dr. Diana Greene; Duval County Clerk of the Courts Ronnie Fussell; Anthony Baltiero – Council Research Division

**Meeting Convened**: 10:00 a.m.

Dr. Leon Haley, CEO of UF Health, thanked the community for its support of UF Health and the rest of the Jacksonville health care system and began with a brief explanation of his presentation. He said that he would spend approximately ten minutes discussing COVID-19 updates, ten minutes discussing other UF Health updates, and leave plenty of times for questions from the audience.

Dr. Haley presented some of the current statistics related to the COVID-19 pandemic noting the national and local number of cases and deaths. In recent weeks, the number of cases and hospitalizations have trended downward. Jacksonville is getting close to being under the 5% infected rate benchmark and Dr. Haley attributed this to the continued usage of masks, proper social distancing, and hand washing. Of the patients that have been hospitalized at UF Health facilities due to COVID-19 related reasons, 500 patients have recovered and were released, and 74 patients have died. The COVID-19 virus is generally perceived as being a respiratory issue, but Dr. Haley said that the virus impacts other areas of the body, particularly cardiac functions.

Dr. Haley presented some demographics of COVID-19 patients. Up to 40% of the patients are between the ages of 50 and 70. Of the same patient population, 64% are African American. Most of the patient population has come from the 32209 and 32208 zip codes. Dr. Haley discussed the current PPE situation noting that UF Health now has a bank of PPE supplies that can last for 100+ days. Despite hospitalizations being in decline, Dr. Haley discussed upcoming hot spots that may be cause for concern. He focused on the upcoming Labor Day weekend holiday and the start of the Jaguars NFL season and said that immediate widespread re-openings of schools and other industries depends on the community spread impacts of these upcoming hot spots. Dr. Haley finished his COVID-19 update by saying that there are 3 vaccine trials upcoming and that research has shown that basic steroids seems to be effective in limiting COVID-19’s impact.

Dr. Haley provided additional updates relating to the UF Health Jacksonville system. For the second year in a row, UF Health Jax was named a LGBTQ+ Healthcare Quality Leader for their inclusive care to the LGBTQ+ community and their families. The UF Health ER nurses won the Lantern Award for their outstanding work. The UF Health NICU staff won the Beacon Award and accolades were given to the Cardiology department. Dr. Haley briefly discussed the Urban Health Alliance and the importance of connecting with the community noting different measures that they are taking, including setting up a community connection hub, starting a food pantry, and going beyond medicine and healthcare to engage the community on the front lines. Other updates include continued work with veterans with brain injuries, general building upgrades to the downtown facilities, hurricane preparedness, and a strong encouragement for everyone to get the flu shot to avoid two overlapping pandemics. Following Dr. Haley’s presentation, the floor was opened to questions.

A question was asked anonymously about what measures should be taken to continue the decline of COVID-19 infections and hospitalizations. Dr. Haley said that it is imperative to continue to wear masks in public and to continue to maintain social distancing. He also said that getting a flu shot will also be extremely helpful because it will greatly lessen the burden of healthcare facilities.

Mayor Brown, Neptune Beach, asked if there are any concerns about getting the flu shot and also getting the inevitable COVID-19 vaccine. Dr. Haley said that the interactions between the two shots are a huge concern, but for now there is no vaccine and we will be well into flu season before any vaccine is available so it is in the best interest of everyone to continue to get regular flu shots to avoid a flu pandemic on top of COVID-19.

A question was asked about advice for leaders in other businesses/industries during the COVID-19 pandemic. Dr. Haley stressed the importance of communication and said that he records an informative video for his staff daily to keep everyone informed and connected. He said that it is important to check in with staff members regularly and when possible to physically go and visit the frontline facilities. Listening is also a vital part of the communication process and integral to understanding what is going in with your staff. Dr. Haley said that it is essential to keep the focus forward and to maintain striving toward the company’s goals.

Dr. Haley closed by encouraging people to continue a communitywide mask approach and to maintain social distancing whenever possible. Due to the time of year and uncertainty of an upcoming COVID-19 vaccine, Dr. Haley highly urged everyone to get a flu shot to prevent a flu pandemic coinciding with COVID-19.

With no further comments or questions, the meeting was adjourned.

**Meeting adjourned:** 10:37 a.m.

Minutes: Anthony J. Baltiero, Council Research Division

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