

**OFFICE OF THE CITY COUNCIL**

**RESEARCH DIVISION**

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**CITY COUNCIL BRIEFING BY UF HEALTH JACKSONVILLE**

**COVID-19-19 EMERGENCY RESPONSE**

**Remote meeting via teleconference**

**July 2, 2020**

**10:00 a.m.**

**Location:** Remote meeting via teleconference

**In attendance:** Council Members Scott Wilson, Garrett Dennis, Al Ferraro, Joyce Morgan, Ron Salem, Michael Boylan (other council members may have been listening on the call but did not identify themselves as present)

**Also**: Dr. Leon Haley and Senator Aaron Bean - UF Health Jacksonville; Mayor Charlie Latham – Jacksonville Beach; Mayor Ellen Glasser – Atlantic Beach; Mayor Elaine Brown – Neptune Beach; State Senator Audrey Gibson; State Representative Cord Byrd; School Board Member Lori Hershey; Dr. Diana Green – School Superintendent; Mike Bruno – Jacksonville Sheriff’s Office; Richard Distel – Council Research Division

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

Sen. Aaron Bean moderated and opened the call thanking participants for joining and introduced Dr. Haley.

Dr. Haley said that when they had planned this third call, the thought was to be discussing the success of flattening the curve, but in the region things have changed very quickly. He detailed the opening of the command center on March 22nd and how it was focused on responding and preparing. The technology is always improving at the command center. Dr. Haley covered the timeline of the past few months and how the hospitals have opened back up elective surgeries in early May. He said that they have decided to have a COVID-19 specific ICU and ward concentrated at the downtown campus and this has been working.

Dr. Haley explained that the shift has now moved to a restorative phase so that the hospitals can do elective procedures while at the same time maintaining the supplies and testing for COVID-19. There has also been a focus on doing community testing outreach. The dashboard is always at the forefront and they have been reviewing where the numbers are in regard to patients, capacity and supplies. Dr. Haley covered the demographics and risk factors such as diabetes that lead to a higher risk. Dr. Haley talked about events which occurred around Memorial Day when George Floyd and others were murdered at the hands of police, and the environment changed with the protests and unrest the employees had more on their minds, as did the patients. Dr. Madeline Joseph, pediatrician and Associate Dean for Equity and Inclusion for the College of Medicine Jacksonville and Ann-Marie Knight, VP of Community Engagement and Chief Diversity Officer for the hospital, were already working on equity, access, diversity and inclusion prior to these tragedies. They were aware and making progress, now that has picked up and they are hosting virtual listening sessions, offering space for employees to share. Unfortunately very quickly after reopening we began to see negative impacts in terms of case loads: currently there are 38 patients in house with 27 on the floor and 11 in the ICU. The sister hospital at Jackson Memorial in south FL has case volumes much greater than here and have made the decision to halt elective surgeries again. There has been a pivot to virtual care for some 30 telehealth visits/day to well over 1,000 in May and June; this was a welcome opportunity by patients and physicians alike. Dr. Haley talked about celebrating the 150th anniversary as an organization – formed in 1870 and on June 4th they had a scaled down commemoration event with employees to mark that significant milestone. Dr. Haley talked about the future, and a new partnership with Flagler Health in St. Johns County; this pursuit allows the hospital to plan for the next phase of a growth strategy and focus on the I-95 corridor and a place of high population growth.

Questions & Answers

Senator Bean moderated questions and answers.

Senator Gibson asked about the testing lag and the importance of masks vs. distancing. Dr. Haley said that they do not have the rapid test anymore, in the hospital the tests are a few hours depending on the time of day and the volumes. He said that ideally you should wear a mask and social distance and if you cannot wear a mask you should make sure to distance.

CM Dennis asked about contact tracing and how it has worked. Dr. Haley said that there aren’t enough health workers to do this work. It’s a bit disjointed, DOH and hospitals do some on their own, UF has one way and are constantly trying to improve upon that.

CM Ferraro asked how we should wash cloth masks. Dr. Haley said that cloth masks can be washed in your traditional washing machine; N95 masks at the hospital are being sterilized beyond 3-4 days when supplies are low.

CM Morgan said that essential workers are often those who have to go to work, often are low income and have to go to work regardless of how safe it is.

CM Salem said he is being inundated with emails suggesting that there are harmful effects for healthy person to wear a mask. Dr. Haley said that to his knowledge there is no evidence of risk for your average healthy adult; perhaps people with sleep apnea, COPD, asthma but that is small percentage.

Former CM Mia Jones asked about pediatric patients and testing. Dr. Haley said that children have been an enigma, though they get it at a lower rate and very few deaths, encouraging people to watch for signs and symptoms.

CM Boylan said that people are confused if masks are safe and said that UF should put out a statement to clear up any confusion, as COVID-19-19 is here to stay, hopefully as a manageable disease. Masks and social distancing are very important for the time being to keep the transmission of the disease under control.

**Meeting adjourned:** 10:41 a.m.

Minutes: Richard Distel, Council Research Division

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