

**OFFICE OF THE CITY COUNCIL**

**RESEARCH DIVISION**

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4TH FLOOR, CITY HALL

JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA 32202

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**UF Health Community Call**

 **February 18 2022**

**11:00 a.m.**

**Meeting Minutes**

**Location:** Telephone conference call

**In attendance:** CM Priestly Jackson; other Council Members may have been listening to the teleconference but not identified

**UF Health:** Dr. Linda Edwards, Associate Professor & Dean, College of Medicine Jacksonville; Dr. Patel, UF Health Jacksonville; Chad Nielson MPH, UF Public Health Officer

**Also**: Florida Senator Aaron Bean – UF Health Jacksonville; Florida Senator Audrey Gibson; Mayor Ellen Glasser – City of Atlantic Beach; Colleen Hampsey – Council Research Division

**Meeting Convened**: 11:00 a.m.

Senator Bean welcomed the group and explained the format for asking questions. This was the 23rd UF Health community public health update teleconference call of this nature.

Chad Nielson, UF Health Public Health Officer, provided an update and said that there are currently 60 Covid patients in their hospital (average inpatient age is 60, with 8-10 days of positivity). As a comparison, they had 136 Covid patients at the time of the January 14, 2022 Community Call. The UF Health pandemic command center has been in operation for 712 days. UF Health Jacksonville has resumed elective procedures and patient visitation. Mr. Nielson mentioned the Federal vaccine mandate for healthcare workers and the March deadline for compliance.

Mr. Nielson relayed a recent success story about a young man (Fabian) who was hospitalized for 164 days from Covid. He was admitted to UF Health Jacksonville on Aug. 21, 2021 during the Delta wave, was unvaccinated, and was often near death including two months in a coma. For 109 of his 164 days at the hospital, the young man was hooked up to an ECMO (Extracorporeal Membrane Oxygenation) machine, a device that pumps blood and oxygen for patients who have lung and heart damage. Fortunately, he survived and was released on February 1, 2022.

Mr. Nielson said that currently the positivity rate in Florida is 14p percent, slightly higher in Jacksonville, and there has been a 54 percent reduction in positive cases since the last community call in January. Mr. Nielson spoke about the importance of receiving the full Covid vaccine.

Dr. Patel, UF Health Jacksonville, spoke about minimizing risk, vaccinations, the use of masks, hand washing and distancing when possible. Roughly 33 percent of eligible Floridians are not vaccinated at all, and 75 percent of those eligible have not received booster shots yet. Dr. Patel said that virtually all of the positive cases nationally at from the omicron variant. He spoke about the availability of treatment options -anti-viral medications, monoclonal antibodies etc. – that were not around in the early days of the pandemic. Dr. Patel mentioned a nasal vaccine being studied that combines one shot with a dose of nasal spray to combat the virus closer to the point of entry (the nose). Such a ‘prime and spike’ vaccine would be easier to store and administer, making it an asset for global use. Dr. Patel talked about long term effects of Covid, with new and/or ongoing symptoms. He estimated that 10-50 percent of those who had Covid could develop myriad long-term issues.

Ann-Marie Knight, UF Health VP of Community Engagement, spoke about various public health initiatives. She spoke about the food pharmacy that opened last year (patients have seen improvements with diabetes, hypertension and weight loss), Covid education campaigns and an upcoming social service hub to assist those in need of resources.

Dr. Edwards, Dean UF College of Medicine Jacksonville, thanked all on the UF Health team for their tireless work throughout the pandemic. Dr. Edwards spoke about UF Health Jacksonville expansion, with a facility on Kernan Road, an ambulatory surgery center, Northside facility, and urgent care centers.

Q&A

Mr. Nielson was asked about hospitalizations and vaccinations, and he said that 80 percent of their Covid inpatients are not vaccinated.

Dr. Patel was asked about new variants, and he said that mutations can and will happen. Such mutations can either make the virus stronger and/or more transmissible; or mutations could decrease the power/strength of the virus. He cautioned that although things are looking better than they did a month ago, the pandemic is not over, and masks and safe practices should continue to be in use.

**Meeting adjourned:** 11:31 a.m.

Minutes: Colleen Hampsey, Council Research Division

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