

SunSentinel
LOCAL

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COVID-19 IN FLORIDA

With 8,401 reported Sunday, cases now top 1.2M

By Susannah Bryan
South Florida Sun Sentinel

Florida reported 8,401 new coronavirus cases on Sunday and another 95 new resident deaths linked to COVID-19. The state has now reported 1,201,566 cases since the pandemic began.

Overall, more than 17.8 million people have tested positive for COVID-19 across the U.S., according to Johns Hopkins University's COVID-19 dashboard.

The U.S. has the highest number of deaths, with at least 317,408 as of 4:30 p.m. Sunday.

Worldwide, nearly 76.7 million people have tested positive for COVID-19 and more than 1.69 million people have died from the highly infectious coronavirus.

In Europe, several countries were banning travel for the United Kingdom on Sunday in an effort to block a new strain of coronavirus that's taken hold in southern England.

France, Germany, Italy, Belgium, Austria, Ireland, the Netherlands and Bulgaria all announced restrictions on U.K. travel.

The fast-moving new variant of the virus is reportedly 70% more

transmissible than existing strains.

On Sunday, British Health Secretary Matt Hancock described the new variant as "out of control," adding to the sense of alarm.

South Florida

Palm Beach County: 459 additional cases and 3 more deaths. The county now has 76,602 confirmed cases and 1,847 deaths, including 28 non-residents.

Broward County: 838 additional cases and 8 more deaths. Broward has a known total of 127,240 cases and 1,806 deaths since the begin-

ning of the pandemic. The death tally includes 30 non-residents.

Miami-Dade County: 2,019 additional cases and 16 new deaths. The county now has 274,117 confirmed cases and 4,091 deaths, including 25 non-residents.

Testing and positivity

Public health experts say the virus is considered under control when the COVID-19 test positivity rate is under 5%. But since Oct. 29, Florida has exceeded 5% in its widely publicized calculation for assessing the rate for testing of

residents.

The state reported a daily positivity rate of 7.89% on Sunday, down from 8.33% the day before. This method of calculating positivity counts new infections only, but also counts repeat negative tests, which skews the figure downward.

According to the state, the new reported case numbers reflect the results of 103,369 COVID-19 tests of Florida residents received from labs in the past day, down from 137,515 results reported the day before.

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CARLINE JEAN/SOUTH FLORIDA SUN SENTINEL

Santa gets down with donations

Santa, aka, Rich Molina, dances during a food donation at Compson Place at Renaissance Commons in Boynton Beach on Friday. Compson Place at Renaissance Commons, Palm Beach County Office of Community Revitalization, Living Hungry, together with local businesses and volunteers, distribute holiday meals to 300 preselected families in need.

Ieraci, longtime Fort Lauderdale leader, dies of COVID-19

By Susannah Bryan
South Florida Sun Sentinel

FORT LAUDERDALE — A powerful Fort Lauderdale beachfront community has lost its charismatic leader with the eagle eye for detail and the "force of nature" to get things done.

Pio Ieraci, longtime president of the Galt Mile Community Association, died at early Sunday from COVID-19, city officials confirmed. He was 58.

"He was on a ventilator for 14

days," Mayor Dean Trantalis said. "It's a terrible shock to the community. It's a real loss. Our heart goes out to his family."

Ieraci spent 30 years as president of the Galt Mile Community Association representing the interests of 30 oceanfront condos and 16,000 residents.

A stickler for details, the Canadian-born Ieraci was a unique blend of businessman, family man, diplomat and village shaman, according to his bio on the association's website.

Vice Mayor Steve Glassman, who became fast friends with Ieraci after meeting him 20 years ago, was reeling from the news of his death.

"I'm in shock," Glassman said. "He's been president of the Galt Mile Association forever. He's been such a force of nature when it comes to community activism. He's so involved and so caring, always out there and so involved. And a strong advocate for protect-

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Pio Ieraci, president of the Galt Mile Community Association in Fort Lauderdale, died Sunday at age 58, city officials confirmed. CARLINE JEAN / SUN SENTINEL

The secret to COVID's spread might be buried in wastewater

By Amber Randall
South Florida Sun Sentinel

Researchers at Florida Atlantic University have a different, somewhat disgusting way to test for the coronavirus on campus and possibly predict where it will spread.

Researchers are looking for remnant coronavirus particles inside the university's sewer systems.

Wastewater is tested at lift stations, the pumping stations where raw sewage collects before being moved to higher elevations.

"The goal of our program is to be able to really signal to the administration and to students themselves that these particular buildings are safe and the things that we are doing on campus are really working so it's safe to be on campus," explained professor Daniel Meeroff of the Department of Civil, Environmental & Geomatics Engineering.

FAU's program started in March when the pandemic first hit Florida. It evolved from detecting the coronavirus in wastewater to a more sensitive system that can give researchers a trend of where cases might be heading.

The research team — a professor, a doctoral student, a master's degree student and three undergraduates — obtained numbers from the administration for how many people are in quarantine and how many are presumed to have COVID-19 after being exposed to the virus. They then compared those numbers to the virus concentrations in sewer water and detected trends for cases on campus ahead of time.

Take Dormitory 2, for example. Researchers pulled sewer water from the building's lift station in the middle of October. They were able to see a spike in the presence

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Rap, reggae and reality TV in Miami

'Behind The Beats' video series launched by music insider

By Rod Stafford Hagwood
South Florida Sun Sentinel

If you were on the inside of Miami's hot hip hop scene over the last 15 years, you probably already know Abebe Lewis.

He stages nightclub events and produces music festivals throughout South Florida, hanging out with a glossy rap pack that includes Flo Rida, Rick Ross, Pitbull, Jason Derulo, Trick Daddy, Busta Rhymes and Ne-Yo.

But even those not in the know can get a glimpse and feel of that world with Lewis' two new video interview series, "Behind The Beats" and "Behind The Culture."

For the last three months, both are getting anywhere from 1,000 to 5,000 live viewers when he livestreams them on Instagram. com/abebelewis and Facebook. com/abebe.lewis. He also posts



From left, Rico Love and Abebe Lewis, who recently launched "Behind The Beats" and "Behind The Culture" video interviews on Instagram and Facebook. YANELIS AGUILA / COURTESY

them at YouTube.com/LiveMiamiTV.

"There are so many people I feel like have done so many great things ... that are based here," Lewis says. "There are so many dope artists and they are on the rise. I know who's who because

I'm in the studio with them; I'm around these people on a daily basis."

So far, 12 or so interviews have dropped. Since September interviews have included:

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Now that Tom Brady is a Florida man, you can get a Brady license plate

By Brett Clarkson
South Florida Sun Sentinel

Lest you have any lingering doubts that Tom Brady is a full-fledged Florida man, here's more proof: drivers in the Sunshine State can now get a specialty license plate featuring the six-time Super Bowl champ.

And it's for a good cause. The Tampa Bay Buccaneers quarterback will be featured on a Florida plate that will benefit Best Buddies International, the Miami-based organization has announced.

The organization is described on its website as "the world's largest organization dedicated to ending the social, physical and economic isolation of the 200 million people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD)."



A Florida specialty license plate featuring Tom Brady will be available to drivers in the Sunshine State, with proceeds benefiting Best Buddies International. BEST BUDDIES INTERNATIONAL

The plates can be pre-bought for \$35, according to Best Buddies.

Once 3,000 are purchased, the plates will be produced and buyers will be given instructions on how to get them. They can also be purchased and given as a gift.

Proceeds will benefit Best Buddies.

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