7/31/20 COVID-19 UPDATE:

Your local health department is here to assist you with questions related to COVID-19 (new coronavirus).

GULF TESTING NUMBERS STATUS
Number of unduplicated COVID-19 tests so far: 3,355
Number of negative tests: 3,014
Number of positive tests: 336
Weekly Positivity for July 24-30: 15% (93 positive/609 total tests)

For the full County COVID-19 Data Summary, please visit:
http://ww11.doh.state.fl.us/comm/_partners/covid19_report_archive/county_reports_latest.pdf

For Daily Gulf County COVID-19 Updates straight to your phone: text GULFCOVID to 888777
Florida Department of Health in Gulf County: 850-227-1276
Florida Department of Health in Franklin County: 850-653-2111
There is also a hotline available at **866-779-6121** or email COVID-19@flhealth.gov.
Follow the CDC.gov website for the latest guidance on COVID-19 and check out Floridahealth.gov to keep up with state-specific updates.

What's NEW in today's update:
Gulf County COVID-19 Profile Report 07/29/2020 (see link above)

A MESSAGE FROM YOUR COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Question: How do you know if your community is moving toward a COVID-19 downward trend?
Answer: We look at the weekly positivity percentage to help guide us. You want the positivity percentage to be as low as possible. This is important because a surge of new cases can increase exposure in the community. Our goal is to keep our vulnerable populations safe, maintain our medical capacity and aim for less than 5% or lower positivity for two weeks straight and keep going. We will share the new positivity percentage every Friday.

The percent is based on the number of people who test positive in a week divided by all the people tested that week, excluding people who have previously tested positive. This data is reviewed and corrected in our surveillance system daily to give us the most accurate picture, so counts can change over time. Keep in mind, as we clean up testing data, the revisions are not usually drastic enough to change weekly percentages. This is why we chose weekly trends vs. daily trends for our rural communities. Examples: we do move positive cases of individuals who only came here to get tested (and didn't stay here) to the county they live in. And we also exclude congregated settings like prison inmates (both positive and negative) in this briefing update so that our numbers reflect community positivity. We've also been asked to round our numbers to the nearest percentage, which we've done for this report.

For Gulf:

- Week July 24-30 is 15% (93 positive/609 total tests)
- (This number excludes 11 prison inmate tests during the same week.)
- The previous week of July 17-23 was at 20%. So, we are moving downward (the right direction). Let's continue to follow CDC guidance to help us interrupt the spread of the virus.

For Franklin:

- Week July 24-30 is 5% (20 positive/426 total tests)
- (This number excludes 7 new prison inmate tests.)
- July 17-23 was 6%, so Franklin is doing well to keep the spread of the disease low. Keep following the CDC guidance.

So what kind of cases did we see this week? A lot of cases were related to family households, with more family members becoming infected from the first positive case. Some businesses have had cases and we work closely with employers to ensure individuals are isolated, contacts are in quarantine and sanitation practices are in place. Our businesses are working hard to keep folks safe and we have a campaign coming soon to help promote their efforts.

How can I help my community bring the positive percentage down? Follow CDC guidance. Social Distance. Please wear masks in places where social distancing cannot be maintained. Wash your hands frequently. Disinfect surfaces. Stay home when ill. Stay away from large crowds and people who you know are ill.

CLOTH FACE COVERS/MASK

Why wear the mask in public?
Answer: My cloth face covering protects you. Your cloth face covering protects me. Although not a 100% guarantee, the use of masks has been proven using actual case investigations to dramatically reduce the spread of the virus. People who are infected can spread the virus before they develop symptoms or in the absence of symptoms. Wearing a cloth face covering may help prevent the spread of the virus by people who are infected and do not know it. Use of cloth face coverings continues to be a recommendation long-term prevention measures such as vaccines are being developed.

Cloth face coverings do not replace other protective measures. CDC still recommends that you stay at least 6 feet away from other people (social distancing), wash your hands frequently, and avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth….and your face covering. Cloth face coverings should not be placed on children under age 2.

If you or someone you love needs a cloth mask, please call 850-340-3016.
The CDC recommends wearing cloth face coverings in public settings where other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain, especially in areas of significant community-based transmission.

For information on how you can make a facemask at home, visit https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover.html and watch this video https://youtu.be/tPx1yqvJgf4.

QUARANTINE/ISOLATION FACTS

The quarantine period is important. We need close contacts to a positive case to quarantine for 14 days from the date of their exposure to the positive individual. Getting a test that is negative during the quarantine period does not stop the clock. We have seen many individuals develop infection on the second week of quarantine, so it is really important to stay quarantined for the full 14-day period. Household quarantine can be a little more stretched since it can be very difficult for a positive individual to properly isolate from everyone else. If you live in the same household as a positive case, you need to quarantine while the person is sick and once this individual is no longer infectious, that's when your quarantine 14 period will start. We explain all of this to every close contact identified and can provide quarantine orders to each individual.

I tested positive for COVID19. When can I be around others (no longer infectious)? If you tested positive for COVID19, you need to stay at home and isolate per the guidance provided by public health officials. If you think or know you had COVID-19, and had symptoms, you can be with others after at least 10 days since symptoms first appeared AND at least 24 hours has passed with no fever without fever-reducing medication AND symptoms have improved. If you tested positive for COVID-19 but had no symptoms, you can be with others after 10 days have passed since your test. If you develop symptoms after testing positive, follow the guidance above that includes fever and symptoms improving. Follow this link to stay tuned on updates: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/end-home-isolation.html

TESTING

If you suspect you might have COVID19, please do not travel here. Please get a COVID19 test (nasal swab for active infection) in your community and know your results before you arrive. Stay home when you are sick and follow CDC guidelines. Visitors are also responsible for helping to keep our communities safe and healthy.

Call your health care provider first or if you are symptomatic to determine the need for testing. If a person thinks they have COVID-19, they should call their health care provider before going to their office so the provider can take precautions to prevent exposing other people. In some cases, they are going to meet you in the parking lot. It's just a precaution. We are really trying to keep our healthcare workers safe. Other patients safe. Review your signs, symptoms and travel history with your physician. Your provider is going to evaluate you for possible causes and rule out other respiratory illnesses (ex. Flu) before testing for COVID-19.

COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT EXPANDED TESTING PLAN

Florida Department of Health in Gulf County will provide FREE COVID-19 testing. Please call (850) 227-1276 to make an appointment.

ANTIBODY TESTING

For questions about antibody testing, contact the Florida Department of Health: Gulf (850) 227-1276.
CDC information about antibody testing can be found using this link: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/testing/serology-overview.html
For a helpful guide, please see: http://ww11.doh.state.fl.us/comm/_partners/action/antibody_testing.pdf

MENTAL HEALTH

COVID-19 have you feeling STRESSED/ANXIOUS/DEPRESSED/UNSURE? NEED SUPPORT? CALL 850-270-8911, available 9-5pm EST. If you are in need of immediate mental health services call one of the agencies below available 24/7:

- National Suicide Prevention Hotline: 1-800-273-TALK (8255)
- SAMSA Disaster Helpline: 1-800-985-5990 or text TalkWithUs to 66746 or the Crisis Text Line: Text "HOME" to 741-741
- Florida Blue launched a 24-hour, free emotional support helpline for all Floridians. Any Floridian – even if uninsured or insured by another plan – can call 833-848-1762 for support in managing feelings of stress, anxiety, grief or fear related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Counselors cannot provide information on COVID-19 testing or treatment.
- Big Bend Community Based Care oversees a wide network of community partners in the fields of mental health counseling, substance use disorder treatment and child protective services throughout an 18-county area in Northwest Florida, from Escambia to Madison counties. Florida residents can call the agency's hotline at 1-888-95-GetHelp or 1-888-954-3843 at any time, day or night, and staff a member will help connect them to a provider in their community, regardless of whether they have health insurance. For more information about Big Bend Community Based Care, visit BigBendCBCGetHelp.org.

WORKPLACE RESOURCES

We get asked a lot about daily health screenings for employers. The CDC has updated strategies and recommendations for employers responding to COVID-19, including those seeking to resume normal or phased business operations. Recommendations to Prepare Your Small Business and Employees for the Effects of COVID-19. In addition to regular temperature checks, the follow questions can be asked to employees:

Daily Health Questionnaire

▪ Do you or anyone in your household have any of the following symptoms? (fever 100.4 or above, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, chills, muscle pain, sore throat, congestion, runny nose, nausea, vomiting, new loss of taste or smell)
▪ Have you or anyone in the household traveled outside of the country or to any highly affected areas in the United States in the past 14 days?
▪ Have you had direct contact (within 6 feet for more than 15 minutes) with anyone who has tested positive with COVID-19 within the last 2 weeks?
▪ Is there anyone in your household under instructions to self-isolate or quarantine due to COVID-19?

RURAL DEVELOPMENT

There are several resources available for rural residents and business coping with the impact of COVID-19. Please visit the Rural Development Coronavirus Response page: https://www.rd.usda.gov/coronavirus

REEMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE

We encourage any Floridian whose employment has been negatively impacted as a result of COVID-19 to visit FloridaJobs.org and click on Reemployment Assistance Service Center to learn more about the program and watch a short video on how to apply. Click here for a direct link to instructions on how to apply for Reemployment Assistance. Select the hyperlink to download and view the Reemployment Assistance Resource Guide.

If you can't apply by email you can pick up a paper application and submit it by mail. Below is the following pick up locations for paper applications in Gulf County. For more information call 850-229-1641.

- Port St. Joe – CareerSource, 401 Peters St.

For a guide to frequently asked questions regarding Re-employment Assistance, visit http://www.floridajobs.org/Reemployment-Assistance-Service-Center/reemployment-assistance/claimants/claimant-faqs-(new).

For information regarding assistance with utilities, rent/mortgages, food pantries, and other local disaster assistance, visit https://www.211.org/

CATHOLIC CHARITIES-BAY/ GULF/ FRANKLIN COUNTIES:

Financial Emergency/Hardship: 850-763-0475
1. Call First Monday of each month after 9am for screenings
2. An initial screening will take place on the phone to complete the application process and receive an appointment. a. Proof of need will be required: past due utility bill, proof of check stub from place of employment (before and after date affected).

FOOD PANTRY LOCATIONS

- 2nd and 4th Tuesday of the Month-WIG Community Center, 401 Peters St., Port St. Joe

- Farm Share distribution will be the 1st and 3rd Monday of month at 4:00pm. Drive-thru pick up on a first come, first serve.
- Second Harvest of the Big Bend: 2nd Saturday of each month from 9:30-11:30, Honeyville Community Center, 240 Honeyville Park Road. (3 family per vehicle limit – all families do not have to be present to receive food. Please, no children. Prepare for long wait times. Please ensure trunk/bed of vehicle has space available. Do not get out of your vehicle. Lower tailgates/lift trunks prior to turning in.

TRAVEL RECOMMENDATIONS
Cases of coronavirus disease (COVID-19) have been reported in all states, and some areas are experiencing community spread of the disease. Travel increases your chances of getting and spreading COVID-19.

CDC recommends you stay home as much as possible, especially if your trip is not essential, and **practice social distancing** especially if you are at **higher risk of severe illness**. **Don't travel if you are sick** or travel with someone who is sick. For more information, visit: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/travel-in-the-us.html

GOVERNOR UPDATES:

To see ALL of Gov. DeSantis Executive Orders regarding COVID-19, visit: https://www.flgov.com/covid-19/

PHASE 2: PLAN FOR FLORIDA'S RECOVERY
On June 3, 2020 Gov. DeSantis announced Phase 2: Safe. Smart. Step-by-step Plan for Florida's Recovery.
To view the complete order, visit: https://www.flgov.com/wp-content/uploads/orders/2020/EO_20-139.pdf
For the Florida Phase 2 Informational Flyer visit: https://bit.ly/2AdBZlq
Click here to see Gov. DeSantis presentation on Florida's Plan for Recovery.

EXECUTIVE ORDER NUMBER 20-166 – Extension of Executive Order 20-52
On July 7th, 2020, Gov. DeSantis extended the state of emergency declared in Executive Order 20-52 for 60 days.
https://www.flgov.com/wp-content/uploads/orders/2020/EO_20-166.pdf
https://www.flgov.com/wp-content/uploads/orders/2020/EO_20-52.pdf

YOUTH ACTIVITIES
On, Friday, May 22, 2020, Gov. DeSantis lifted the restrictions on youth sports and summer camps. This new order will go into effect immediately. Guidance for Organized Youth Activities:
https://floridahealthcovid19.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/FL-Summer-Camp-Guidance-FAQs-5-21-20.pdf

UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION
On April 16, Governor DeSantis issued EO 20-104 which suspends the requirement that Floridians must recertify reemployment assistance status every two weeks.

FORECLOSURES & EVICTION RELIEF
On June 30, the Governor issued Executive Order 20-159, extending EO 20-94, providing targeted, temporary relief from certain mortgage foreclosures and evictions until August 1, 2020.

LOCAL UPDATES:

City of Port St. Joe: An Emergency Declaration of the city of Port St. Joe, Florida; recognizing the national, state and local state of emergency due to the COVID-19 pandemic; requiring the use of facial covering or mask in public settings within the city limits of Port St. Joe, Florida where CDC social distancing guidelines cannot be followed; providing for effective date and sunset date. Adopted, July 21, 2020.

Gulf County Courthouse: Mask are now required to enter the Gulf County Courthouse. This is mandatory, per the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Florida and the Chief Judge of the 14th Judicial Circuit. This means everyone, without exception.

GULF COUNTY PLAN FOR REOPENING SHORT-TERM VACATION RENTALS

The Governor, Ron DeSantis, has lifted the Vacation Rental Ban in Gulf County. The BOCC submitted a plan to safely reopen rentals, which was APPROVED on May 19th. We are so thankful to the Governor and our BOCC for their swift action! In order to reopen safely and help you during this new travel environment, we have put together some tools to help plan your next adventure in Gulf County. We are excited to welcome you back! Let's not Jump In, Let's Wade in!
See county requirements at https://www.visitgulf.com/getyourfeetwet/ and click on "Stay In the Know".

We ask that you join in to help familiarize yourself with the guidelines for Gulf County Vacation Rentals along with the State of Florida and the CDC. Vacation renters are following this CDC map to determine states with higher levels of exposure: http://www.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/index.html. Click on "Rates" above the map to view the most updated information.

DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONAL REGULATION: Effective immediately, DBPR is suspending on premises consumption of alcohol at bars statewide.
http://www.myfloridalicense.com/dbpr/os/documents/EO_2020-09.pdf

HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Starting May 28, 2020, the Franklin and Gulf County Health Departments will resume full clinic services. This includes annual physical exams, well woman exams, Florida Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program, and other routine appointments. Some services will continue to be done curbside or over the phone to decrease unnecessary exposure. Please call 850-227-1276 to schedule an appointment! **Please do not bring visitors with you to your appointments.**

Florida Department of Health issues Public Health Advisory: The Dept. of Health recommends all individuals should wear masks in any setting where social distancing is not possible unless a child is under the age of two, encourage elderly and vulnerable populations to limit interactions outside of the home, and urges all individuals to refrain from participating in gatherings of more than 10 people. These advisory serves to update the Public Health Advisories filed on March 25, 2020, and June 20, 2020. For more information please visit:
http://www.floridahealth.gov/newsroom/2020/07/072420-1446-covid19.pr.html

PIGGLY WIGGLY PSJ is open daily from 6am to 10pm and is now offering ONLINE shopping. Visit www.DurensPigglyWiggly.com for more information. We ask all customers to remain 6 feet apart. The deli is no longer self-serve but is open. Please try to shop one person per buggy.

LIBRARIES

Both Gulf County libraries remain closed until further notice. Curbside pick-up now available THREE days a week Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. Please call or visit NWRLS.com to place holds on library items.

ASCENSION SACRED HEART

Online urgent care is available through Ascension Online Care. You can have a video visit with a doctor without leaving your home. Visit http://ascension.org/onlinecare to start your visit. Please note that Ascension is not a community COVID-19 testing site.

SUPPORTING CHILDREN THROUGH THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

COVID-19 has upended children's daily lives, resulting in added stress and uncertainty. Studies show that adversity during childhood, including adversity stemming from natural disasters, can have lasting impacts on children's social emotional health. Fortunately, families can take steps to support and protect children's emotional well-being during the COVID-19 crisis. For more information visit the Nat'l Institute for Children's Health Quality site at **Article: Supporting Children's Health During and After the COVID-19 Pandemic**

Here are some clear, concrete tips for physically distancing while staying emotionally and socially connected https://preventchildabuse.org/coronavirus-resources/

The Germ that Wears a Crown: A Story About the Coronavirus: This is a story, coloring & activity book from FSU Center for Child Stress & Health to help children cope with COVID-19. The book teaches children about the virus, social distancing and how to express and manage strong emotions. Visit http://fsustress.org/ebook.html to download a free copy!

STAY INFORMED:

To get the latest information, visit FloridaHealth.gov and follow on Social Media:
Florida Department of Health: Twitter @HealthyFla -or- Facebook Florida Department of Health (DOH)
Gulf/Franklin County Community Health Improvement Partners: Facebook Gulf/Franklin County Community Health Improvement Partners