

**City of Coral Gables
Virtual Commission Meeting
May 12, 2020
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL**

City Commission

**Mayor Raul Valdes-Fauli
Vice Mayor Vince Lago
Commissioner Jorge Fors
Commissioner Pat Keon
Commissioner Michael Mena**

City Staff

**City Manager, Peter Iglesias
City Attorney, Miriam Ramos
City Clerk, Billy Urquia
Fire Chief, Marcos de la Rosa**

Public Speaker(s)

Mark Trowbridge

Agenda Item H-2

Update on the City's efforts relating to Coronavirus/COVID-19

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: I think we'll take E-2, I'm sorry H-2, update on the city's efforts relating to Coronavirus/COVID-19.

City Manager Iglesias: Yes Mayor. I have our Fire Chief and Police Chief to give us an update on that. You can start Chief de la Rosa.

Chief de la Rosa: Good afternoon. I was just waiting for everyone to unmute me and if we can, we start our PowerPoint presentation please.

City Manager Iglesias: I believe that's the one for the 427.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Okay,

Chief de la Rosa: Thank you. So good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen of the Commission and Mr. Mayor our next slide, please. We're going to go ahead and discuss today where we are with the
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community testing process and what is our plan to move forward. Next slide, please. Just as a reminder of the word testing is used interchangeable, but make sure they're talking about the correct thing. The city is doing PCR swab test, which is the CDC approved test that determines if a patient is currently contagious and has the presence of the virus. It's not the antibody test which is a blood test that determines if you have antibodies, but not necessarily if you are viral at this time or not, and I just bring that up because I know that I hear the word testing being used interchangeable, but there's two different types of testing. So next slide, please. The City continues, our Call Center continues to identify elderly that fit the homebound testing criteria and the Coral Gables Fire Department Firefighter Paramedics continue to go to these folks' homes and conduct that test. To date, we've had 29 residents that have received that service at home. Next slide. As of April 26th. We began to schedule residents that were interested in the on-site swab testing that we started to do, and testing began on May 1st. We have testing scheduled through the entire month of May and as we had decided this was only open to Gables residents. Next slide, please. This is just a reminder of when our residents signed up. There were three selections that they can make. Priority 1 were Gables residents that were either symptomatic or had an underlying condition. Priority 2 were Gables residents that were below the age of 65, again with symptomatic or underlying medical conditions. And anyone who did not fit these two priorities became a priority three. Next slide, please. To date, we have processed 1,326 submissions. However, the registrants when we called back to determine what priority they were and to schedule them for an appointment. None of them fit the three criteria or the two criteria that I just described. So, what we did was, we prioritized any registrant that called who was 65 years of age or older as the first to receive an appointment for a test, regardless if they had symptoms or underlining conditions. The second priority for scheduling went to anybody who was 65, less than 65 years of age and may have an underlying condition and then those that did not fit any of these two were the third priority. So, our third priority registrants are what we are scheduling to date. All the priorities that fit either 65 and older or had an underlying condition have either been tested or have been scheduled for a test at this time. Next one, please. Next slide, thank you. This is a summary of our testing so far. No go back. You skipped one point. Thank you. As you notice we've tested four days. The first three days we signed a hundred people per day for each one of these. Then we gained some experience and we went ahead and increased it to a hundred and twenty (120). But we've had about a 25 to 30 percent no shows each day that we've scheduled, and we've tested a total of 357 folks. We were asking again about symptoms and taking your temperature at the site when you came in to get tested. We have not found anyone with a fever and out of a 357 that we've currently tested. One of our residents did test positive next slide, please. As I stated earlier, our residents became the priority was to focus on the elderly residents. So out of the 357 folks that we've tested, 307 were 60 years of age or older. As you can see on this graph, the majority of our registrants are between the ages of 60 and 79. Next slide. So, in addition to the days of we've already tested we have 1,170 residents that either were tested or are going to be scheduled throughout the month on these dates that we've already started to make appointments or schedule folks into. So that would mean that we have enough volume right now to test through most of the month. Next slide. Our plan moving forward is to test throughout the last week of the month. That

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means that we will accept on an additional two hundred and forty (240) appointments in addition to the 1,170 that I just described. This gives us a 1,410 either appointments and or folks that have been tested. That means that we have provided on-site testing and opportunity for an appointment throughout the entire month of May and that brings us to our total projected program budget of \$133,000. Next slide, please. So, as we move forward and explore other options or how we're going to evolve this system. We do have an agreement with the lab that are on-site testing infrastructure, the agreement that we have with the lab the site, how we're going to manage the site, all of that will remain in place in the event that in the future as a result of reopening if we do identify a resurgence that we can start up onsite community testing with little lag time. Our Coral Gables Fire Rescue Paramedics are continuing to test our seniors and individuals over the age of 18 that qualify for homebound testing, and our hotline continues to identify all the needs of our residents, including testing needs. Next slide, please. So, we were asked at a meeting a while back for us to present options of testing within the city. So, I put on there that we're going to continue our homebound testing as I stated earlier, and we've identified sites in or near the city that provide for testing. The MD Now Urgent Care Centers, the Baptist Urgent Care Centers and a private physicians office Pure Executive Health, have agreed or are able to test our residents within our city. In addition to the state sites that are still open. Next slide, please. We're also either by all of you in the Commission, and then some of the folks that have called us asked us if we could please provide options that may be available for the serological or antibody testing. So, the Lab Core near our city are conducting the test as is Quest Diagnostic. In addition, we've discussed this with MD Now and they are also providing the service for antibody test. Banyan Medical Center, Pivot Concierge Health, and Physician Health Center, also provide the test at their facilities and having expressed an interest in having a conversation with the City. If we wanted to provide a facility for them to provide the antibody testing within our City, they would be willing to discuss that, and all of these services will bill the resident's insurance. Next slide. So, as I surmise, the call center will continue to address all the needs of our residents. Our paramedics will continue to provide homebound testing. We can provide on-site testing through the entire month of May. That means that last week of May that did not show up in the previous slide that we would go ahead and schedule an additional 240 registrants from what we have currently. The infrastructure to bring up an on-site testing will remain, and we will monitor the resurgence and our staff will continue to identify options for our residents within the City of Coral Gables on our facility that would benefit or increase the best accessibility to test it. And with that I'm open for any question's ladies and gentlemen.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Chief, this is the Mayor. I don't have a question, but I saw something there that upset me very much and I think that upsets the Commissioners very much. Another 357 people that have been scheduled or that were tested a hundred didn't show up. That's a 33 percent no-show rate, which takes valuable appointments away from people that do need it or that do want it, from elderly people or people with symptoms -- 300. I mean out of 357, 133 percent did not show up. I would suggest, Chief, that we have those names and we publicize those names because these people represent the ultimate in irresponsibility. The ultimate in irresponsibility and as much as

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the pressure that's on us to perform testing, for 100 out of 357 not to show up is disrespectful and I think it's cruel and criminal. Yes, Vice Mayor.

Vice Mayor Lago: Thank you. I don't – Listen, I agree with all of your statements except for obviously publishing people's names. I think what we have people, what we have here currently is people who are very have a lot of anxiety. They're very nervous obviously with pandemic, and we expected something like this to happen where people think that by testing by getting a test, they're going to be able to find out, obviously whether they had Coronavirus or not. We've been educating people and I think a lot more people are becoming immersed in what's actually happening and the difference between the two tests like the Chief said, and I think that's what ends up happening. People at the last moment, they do further research and they realize, I don't have any symptoms, I shouldn't be getting this test. I agree with you 110 percent. It's taking the space of people who should be receiving this test and at the end of the day, its spending City resources at a moment where they're very precious. They always are precious, we are very careful with the money, but now more than ever. I don't want to speak for all my colleagues, but I imagine I think we all agree, we need to move on, and if we've all had conversations, I can imagine. I've had them with all our staff, with the City Manager, the ACM, and the City Attorney that we need to move in the fashion of offering antibody testing here in the City, either by referring people to a private institution or an institution like the University of Miami, which I know the Manager was working on that, and I'm also, and I want to put this on the record, and I think my colleagues also agree with me, I'm in favor of offering this test and having some of the residents pay for it, because we need to be very careful, especially now, and that is a test that is significantly, significantly cheaper than the COVID-19 testing and you get the results within 15 minutes. So, I think that's where most cities, municipalities, counties, states are moving in the direction. We need to find COVID-19 testing, but we cannot continue to go out this clip. We're seeing less and less people show up and it's my understanding, Chief, that less people are requesting the COVID-19 testing, correct? or am I wrong?

Chief de la Rosa: That's correct. You're seeing that number dwindle down, especially with regards to those that are seniors. So, for example,

Vice Mayor Lago: And I hate to interrupt you on that point. I want to be clear, for our seniors' people who have underlying conditions or people that are having symptoms and that are seniors. We need to protect them. We need to do what we're doing, which is we're visiting these individuals at home and making sure that they're protected, and they stay home. I don't want to be misconstrued that we want to cut that that service.

Chief de la Rosa: That service will continue. As of May 13th, so tomorrow, anyone who fit that are already that you just described, whether there are 65 years of age or older or have underlying conditions or either have been tested or have been scheduled to be tested between today and tomorrow. So, between following the 13th through the 22nd, the majority of our testing appointments are going to those that have expressed an interest in being tested, but do not meet those two criteria. Each of those days, we have left days open in the event that we do find or

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someone calls in late that needs to be tested that fits either the senior or has an underlying condition so they could be tested, but for the most part past the 13th, we are providing appointments for those that met the third criteria in our priority listing.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: I hope that people who have not shown up realize that they're taking the place and the appointment of those who need it.

Vice Mayor Lago: Yeah. I also, Mayor if I may, just want to, and I imagine my colleagues also probably received the same email. There was from an attorney locally here, who's dealing with other municipalities in assisting in ensuring that these municipalities can now transition to receiving federal funding or insurance funding for some of the individuals that want COVID-19 testing. I know that we're looking forward in the future to hopefully be reimbursed for our efforts, but that's up in the air. It hasn't been from the federal government right now. Things are changing on a day-to-day basis, but I think that we need to explore every opportunity to continue to offer that service to the most needy, but transition over to antibody testing which is a majority of the calls that at least I'm receiving on a day-to-day basis.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you Vice Mayor. Anybody else wish to comment?

Commissioner Mena: Yeah. I'll be brief. I just wanted to sort of focus on the positive aspects of this a little bit. I've heard very good things from everybody who has gone through and gotten tested. They all said the process was handled very smoothly by our staff and by the Fire Department and I want to just commend everybody who was involved, because again, I've heard it's a very, been a very positive process for them. I recognize, obviously people haven't shown up, but my understanding from speaking to the Manager and the Chief de la Rosa that we've adjusted the way we're booking, and we've adjusted for that and things are now running pretty smoothly. So, I think it's okay. All positive things. I'm glad only one person tested positive, it should have been zero, but that's still a pretty good number and hopefully we continue to see that trend.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you. Thank you, Commissioner.

Commissioner Keon: Can I ask we include the information about sites where serological testing can be done and that it will be billed to their insurance. Could we place that on the website also, so people have that information. So, there's one that I mean, it's just information.

City Manager Iglesias: Yes Commissioner, of course.

Commissioner Keon: Thank you.

City Attorney Ramos: Commissioner, we want to open that up and any lab that has it, they can ask to be put on our web page so that we are not exclude anybody. Maybe we have certain criteria that the FDA approved test or something like that. In addition, I think that we need some direction or the Manager needs direction as to what to do with regard to the other type of testing that COVID-19 testing, because as I understand it, on Friday the 22nd, we will have reached the hundred thousand dollar mark for our contract with the laboratory. And so, if we're going to continue to be

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able to schedule into the following week, they need to be considered at the 26th meeting. If we're not going to continue to do that, that's fine too, but you just need to know that.

Commissioner Keon: I would hold it open and I mean, not scheduled but hold it open because as we open up if you find need to and determine there's a need to begin testing again, we have that opportunity, but I wouldn't continue after this week.

City Manager Iglesias: We can with our \$100,000 contract with Bio Collections, we can offer testing through the end of May, at which time the \$100,000 contract with Bio Collections is fulfilled, and we have about another 30 to \$35,000 in logistics cost for setting up the actual testing. All they do is come out and do the actual testing. We take care of everything else. We can test through the end of...[Inaudible]...and we can test the rest which is about around 1,400 people.

Commissioner Mena: My understanding, I'd asked from my pre-agenda yesterday, one of the questions I asked was whether we could make that the final decision...at the next meeting, because the next meeting, obviously is before the end of the month.

Chief de la Rosa: Also, I'd like to add, we have approached the lab and the lab has agreed whether we leave an open field with them or not to reach an agreement with us that if in the event that we do have a resurgence or we identify the need to restart the on-site testing, that they would do it at that time and open a new PO. They're not requiring for us to leave an ongoing reserve with them past the suggested dates.

City Manager Iglesias: And we can quite quickly because we have the site, we have all the operational issues already resolved and it's working quite well. So, if assuming that Bio Collections are the lab can come in, we can set that up very quickly.

City Attorney Ramos: And Commissioner Mena ran out of battery wanted me to let everyone know he'd be right back.

Commissioner Fors: All right. Also, if we are able to continue testing through the end of May and before the end of May, you know, God forbid, we see a second surge, you know, we can call a special meeting to extend it at that point for an amendment. I think we have some wiggle room here.

City Attorney Ramos: Mr. Manager, what is the last date that – I thought it was May 22nd, but maybe I'm wrong.

City Manager Iglesias: May 22nd and then we have another 240 tests beyond that. So, we can extend it to the 1,400, which would be probably until the end of May.

Vice Mayor Lago: Mr. Manager, a quick question. Prior to the next meeting, I would like to see, and I hope my colleagues will support me on this. I'd like to see a plan so that we can offer the antibody testing and to at least see what the financial ramifications are and what we need to roll

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out. Do you think that we could have something, maybe six or several different options presented to us before your meetings?

City Manager Iglesias: We are currently working with the couple of entities to go ahead and get that done. So, they would come in and set up the actual testing and certainly charge from a cost perspective charging the individuals insurance companies. So, as you know, we're working with the university, we're working with various other entities. We try to get this done. I think by the Commission meeting, I'm hoping to have a lot more progress on that.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: The thing here is so flexible and for us to take whatever measures we deem necessary at the time, and if we have to have a special Commission meeting, we can do that.

Chief de la Rosa: So, I'd like to add that in one of my slides, we've kind of started to work towards that Mr. Vice Mayor.

Vice Mayor Lago: Yeah.

Chief de la Rosa: We've identified the Urgent Care MD Now, which is near our city. We've identified that it will be doing the antibody testing. We've also identified three private medical providers that would agree to establish a testing site here in the city and then charge the patient's insurance for that testing to go. That's Physician's Health and Valiant Health. And then as the Manager said, we're also exploring with U-Health. So, there's to my point to you is, that we're already starting to explore those options.

Vice Mayor Lago: And the reason why I bring that up again. It's not it's not because again, I know what you're going through, we all we all speak with staff every single day, but we have a lot of residents that are now they're starting to roll into the idea of antibody testing; and I've also heard from several different residents that we have people who are again, we're taking advantage of other people, other residents. You have mobile units that are coming in that the tests are not reliable. You're talking about some of the testing is over a hundred and fifty dollars per person. So, people are looking for options that are again, that are approved by the city that are going to be cost effective and that are going to be quality. So just want to make sure we put it on the record and we and we notify the residents that we are going to address this issue, because this is the next step in the plan in the three different phase plans that's rolling out, not only at the national, at the state, and at the local level. This is critical for us to getting back to normal is antibody.

City Manager Iglesias: Chief de la Rosa, would you please comment on the accuracy of the antibody testing and issues that we're currently having with that test, because I think it's very important for people to understand.

Chief de la Rosa: So, testing is evolving. As we speak right now there is a blood test that test for antibodies and then they're the serological tests, which is the one that they do a tiny prick on your finger and it is a test that is done through a membrane similar to what would look like if you were testing for glucose or the pregnancy test. Either one of these tests and we're being able to do research on, they all have FDA approval which is called an EU which is an emergency use

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approval. They do not have the CDC or FDA approval that for example, the swab test does, because all of these tests are very new as it's been evolving and as a virus has been evolving. So, they don't have enough experience or evaluation of the test to receive a CDC approval. Most of them range between 70 percent or so accuracy rate. Some as high as a 90 but, all of the tests that we've been able to identify still have the emergency use certification or allowance at this time by the FDA. There is no FDA approval antibody test that has been proven or is have been tested with enough patience to be proven or receive a better accuracy rate.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you everybody.

Commissioner Keon: Could I ask the Chief to...[Inaudible]... the serology tests that they when I find that you have antibodies, it's really not telling you the level of antibodies and we don't have the research yet to tell us how long that those antibodies will exist and how much they will protect you. So, there's a whole portion of this the science has not answered us on with regard to the.... testing. Could you just talk about that for a minute?

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Just a minute folks, we're going now into speculation and we would address her comments. Let's go on.

Commissioner Keon: Okay.

Chief de la Rosa: So, the antibody testing that we have right now identifies the presence of antibodies in your bloodstream, so that basically signifies that you have been exposed and your body has developed antibodies or has fought off the virus and that's all it tells you. It doesn't tell you what your viral, your antibody low, your titer is. It doesn't tell you or it is unknown at this time how long one will have antibodies for the COVID-19 and I certainly, and I want to continue to specify this, it does not determine whether you are currently infectious or not. It just means that you have developed antibodies. Now early on in the disease, let's say three days to two weeks, you will develop antibodies and still be fighting off the Infection, meaning that you're still viral and you're still infectious. That antibody test does not tell you if you're still infectious, only the swap test does. So, it is a test that allows you or lets us learn how many people in our community fought off or were exposed to the virus. But it's very important to specify the difference between the current testing that we are conducting and the antibody test and that one determines if your infectious and the other one only determines that you or identifies the body has been exposed. And fought off the virus.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you Chief.

Commissioner Keon: Thank you.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you. All right. So, we go on to H-3.

City Clerk Urquia: Mr. Mayor before you continue Mark Trowbridge is on the line and he wanted to comment.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: On the testing?

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Mr. Trowbridge: Hi Mayor. Yes, Mark Trowbridge from the Coral Gables Chamber, 224 Catalonia Avenue. I just wanted to ask the Chief to give consideration, are we extending testing into the business community with the reopening and rephasing in the horizon, even if just talking from employers about finding ways to take advantage of that even if there is a cost to them, understanding that, and so given that our city doubles in size on a good day, Monday through Friday, with folks coming into work, just want to know if there has there been any internal conversation about looping in the business community as the employee's begin to phase back in.

Chief de la Rosa: That is something that we would discuss with the Manager and how would be the best way to provide that service to our business community, and what would be the best way to have either the businesses or the employees pay that service? It may have to be through one of the Urgent Cares that I identified that would one of the possibilities, but we'll explore that with the Manager and provide a briefing to you either through the Committee or our next Commission meeting. So, I'll look into that Mark.

Mr. Trowbridge: Thanks Chief. Appreciate it. Thank you. Mr. Mayor.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you.

City Clerk Urquia: Mr. Mayor before you continue. I also want to let you know...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: This is not a public hearing.

City Clerk Urquia: No, no, I understand, but we took down the chat room for the meeting, so anyone wishing to speak needs to either send a message to a host or raise their hand, but there will no longer be comments allowed in the chat room.