

**HIGHLIGHTS: COVID-19 Press Conference**  
**with Governor Ron DeSantis on 4/24/2020**

Governor DeSantis began the press conference today discussing the Re-Open Florida Task Force he assembled that will be providing him with recommendations for re-opening and ramping up Florida's economy in a safe way. The task force has completed over 20 hours of conference call meetings and DeSantis will be going through the task force's recommendations throughout the weekend into the beginning of next week.

**Company Building Global Headquarters in Florida:**

The Governor announced that an aerospace company named Aerion Supersonic that focuses on highspeed flight has selected the location of Melbourne, FL to build their new global headquarters. The company will invest over \$300M in a new campus at the Melbourne airport where they will design and build AS2 supersonic business jets. The new headquarters will also be home to up to 650 new jobs with an average salary of \$105K. CEO Tom Vice briefly spoke on video chat explaining the company's reasons for choosing Florida, adding that by the end of the year they will be breaking ground and they expect 675 new jobs in Florida by 2026.

**Testing:**

- Almost 320K Floridians have been tested as of today; 1 for every 68 Floridians
  - Ratio in southeast Florida is 1 for every 46 Floridians
- Yesterday Florida had over 21K test results with a positivity rate of 6% - 7%

**Fatalities:**

- 93% of fatalities are those 55 years and older
- 7% of fatalities consist of those under the age of 55

**Drive-Through Testing Sites (in conjunction with the National Guard):**

- 7 drive through testing sites have tested 67K Floridians

**Walk-Up Testing Sites:**

- 4K tested at 6 walk-up testing sites supported by the state
- 2 locations in Broward County
- Rotating locations in Orange County
- 2 locations in Hillsborough County
- 1 location in Palm Beach County

**Long-Term Care Facilities:**

National Guard strike teams have tested over 5K Floridians in nursing homes and assisted living facilities. DeSantis also expanded the teams from the original ten, to fifty total teams.

**Lab Capacity:**

The Department of Health has two new contracts with two private labs in Florida in order to increase testing turnaround to 18K samples per day (test results will be available between 24 - 48 hours).

#### Antibody Tests:

Florida is expecting 200K antibody tests soon, coming from China. DeSantis said that the state is working on obtaining an additional couple hundred thousand antibody tests from a south Florida lab that is working on getting FDA emergency approval. The federal government will also be sending antibody tests in the beginning of May. The University of Miami has been working on an antibody study in order to gather more data and get a better understanding of how the virus is spreading.

#### Pharmacists Allowed to Test for Coronavirus:

DeSantis announced today that he is directing the Surgeon General to allow licensed pharmacists to order and administer COVID-19 tests. He is encouraging pharmacies to offer testing to Floridians with help from the state.

#### Hospital Bed Availability:

- 40% - 45% state-wide hospital bed availability (stable)
- More hospital and ICU beds are available today than before the outbreak began

#### For Phone Updates:

- Text "FLCOVID19" to 888777

#### Questions:

During the question portion of the press conference, DeSantis told reporters that 2,200 state employees are working around the clock to help process physical reemployment assistance applications, online applications, as well as assist with the call center on behalf of the Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO). Some state workers are stationed at Florida State University's campus. He added that DEO has made over 200K payments totaling almost \$100M.

*\*You can watch the press conference here: <https://thefloridachannel.org/videos/4-24-20-press-conference-on-coronavirus-covid-19/>*