



Proclamation

Board of County Commissioners
Manatee County, Florida

- WHEREAS**, a new strain of coronavirus has caused an infectious disease ("COVID-19") that has not been previously identified in humans; and
- WHEREAS**, the World Health Organization ("WHO") raised its assessment of the COVID-19 threat from high to very high and declared a public health emergency of international concern related to COVID-19 on January 30, 2020; and
- WHEREAS**, the WHO declared COVID-19 a pandemic on March 11, 2020; and
- WHEREAS**, on March 1, 2020, Governor Ron DeSantis issued Executive Order 20-51, declaring that appropriate measures to control the spread of COVID-19 in the State of Florida are necessary, and therefore directed that a Public Health Emergency be declared in the State of Florida; and
- WHEREAS**, as of September 27, 2020, at least 11,436 people in Manatee County have tested positive for COVID-19, with at least 291 deaths, and additional confirmed cases have been reported in neighboring counties, including Sarasota, Hillsborough, and Pinellas; and
- WHEREAS**, it is the duty of Manatee County to take protective measures including, but not limited to, development of incident action response plans, procurement of personal protective equipment, pandemic preventative training and exercise coordination, and similar activities to protect the public health and safety of the community; and
- WHEREAS**, on March 2, 2020, Manatee County began to take protective measures in response to the imminent threat to the public health, safety, and welfare presented by COVID-19; and
- WHEREAS**, Section 252.38, Florida Statutes, prescribes the establishment of a local emergency management agency, the appointment of a director thereof, the power and authority thereof, and the power and authority of the Board of County Commissioners in emergency situations; and
- WHEREAS**, Manatee County initially declared a State of Local Emergency on March 16, 2020, pursuant to Resolution No. 20-041, and on March 24, 2020, pursuant to Resolution No. 20-045; and
- WHEREAS**, COVID-19 is spread through airborne transmission from individuals sneezing, speaking, and coughing, and infectious droplet nuclei can spread for a great distance; and
- WHEREAS**, since April of 2020, the Board has proactively directed the implementation of numerous efforts, including an aggressive communications campaign, to encourage persons in the County to practice social distancing, wash and sanitize their hands, clean high touch surfaces, and wear face coverings as community mitigation strategies to increase containment of COVID-19; and
- WHEREAS**, the continued operation of businesses providing goods and services is necessary to provide essential goods and services to the public and visitors and to support the local economy; and

WHEREAS, federal and state health officials have indicated that they expect additional cases of COVID-19 to be identified in the coming days and months and, based on the highly contagious nature of COVID-19, additional person-to-person transmission is likely; and

WHEREAS, the use of face coverings has been identified as a measure to assist in preventing individuals who may be spreading COVID-19 from spreading it to other individuals in public settings when other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain; and

WHEREAS, to reduce the spread of the disease, the Centers for Disease Control ("CDC") recommends the use of cloth face coverings in public settings where other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain, such as grocery stores and pharmacies, since many individuals with no symptoms can spread the virus, and even individuals who develop symptoms can transmit the virus to others before showing symptoms; and

WHEREAS, Florida Medical Association President Ronald L. Giffler, MD, JD, MBA, has issued a statement urging Floridians to use face coverings to prevent the further spread of COVID-19, and further calling on local officials to adopt regulations requiring the use of face coverings in public places, specifically stating "(t)he science is clear. Asymptomatic infected individuals can release aerosol particles while breathing and speaking. Not wearing a mask or face covering increases exposure, whereas universal masking greatly reduces the spread of viral particles. The message is simple: For the sake of your health and the health of everyone around you, Florida's doctors want you to wear a mask."; and

WHEREAS, on June 22, 2020, after Florida reported more than 4,000 new cases of COVID-19 in a single day, State Surgeon General Scott Rivkees issued an additional public health advisory recommending people wear face coverings in any setting where social distancing is not possible; and

WHEREAS, as of September 27, 2020, Florida reported a total of 700,504 cases of COVID-19 and 14,032 deaths, representing a significant increase since the State Surgeon General issued his June 22, 2020, advisory; and

WHEREAS, the CDC recommends only simple cloth face coverings for the general population and not surgical masks or N-95 respirators because these are critical supplies that must continue to be reserved for healthcare workers and other medical first responders; and

WHEREAS, cloth face coverings are relatively inexpensive and readily available, as the CDC states that they can be made from household items and provides online guidance for making "do-it yourself" coverings for people who cannot or do not want to buy one; and

WHEREAS, the County, through its "Mask Up Manatee!" promotion, has made face coverings available to the public; and

WHEREAS, the CDC does not recommend wearing a cloth face covering for children under the age of 2, or anyone who has trouble breathing, or is unconscious, incapacitated, or otherwise unable to remove a mask without assistance; and

WHEREAS, the Board was provided with information regarding the need to wear face coverings to prevent the spread of COVID-19, including CDC guidelines and recommendations of health officials; and

WHEREAS, the CDC Director, Dr. Robert R. Redfield, stated "We are not defenseless against COVID-19. Cloth face coverings are one of the most powerful weapons we have to slow and stop the spread of the virus -- particularly when used universally within a community setting. All Americans have a responsibility to protect themselves, their families, and their communities."; and

WHEREAS, earlier this month, Dr. Redfield went even further to state "I might even go so far as to say that this face mask is more guaranteed to protect me against COVID than when I take a COVID vaccine, because the immunogenicity may be 70%. And if I don't get an immune response, the vaccine is not going to protect me. This face mask will."; and

WHEREAS, the Board finds it is in the best interest of public health, safety, and welfare of the residents and workers of and visitors to Manatee County to wear suitable face coverings in certain public locations to slow the spread of COVID-19.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT PROCLAIMED by the Board of County Commissioners of Manatee County, Florida, that, in the best interest of the County, and furtherance of the public health, safety, and welfare of the County, the Board strongly encourages individuals who cannot social distance to wear face coverings and supports businesses displaying signs requiring face masks to be worn in business establishments to reduce the spread of COVID-19.

ADOPTED with a quorum present and voting this 29th day of September 2020.



BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
MANATEE COUNTY, FLORIDA

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Betsy Benac", is written over a horizontal line.

Betsy Benac, Chairperson

ATTEST: Angelina Colonnese
Clerk of the Circuit Court

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "By Vicki Jesman D.C.", is written over a horizontal line.