

Weekly Coronavirus Response Update Call

The Weekly Coronavirus Response Update Call will be changing to a Bi-Weekly (every other Wednesday) format.

The next call will be Wednesday, January 20, 2021.

National and/or State News Update-Ben Moser

Ben gave the following updates concerning the coronavirus that causes COVID-19:

New York Times:

- At least 3,664 new coronavirus deaths and 238,999 new cases were reported in the United States on January 5, 2021. Over the past week, there has been an average of 219,684 cases per day, an increase of 2 percent from the average two weeks earlier. As of Wednesday morning, more than 21,103,900 people in the United States have been infected with the coronavirus according to a New York Times database.
- In 40 states and territories, including Alabama and Georgia, new cases are higher and staying high.
- In 10 states and territories new cases are higher but going down
- In 5 states and territories cases are lower and staying low

Elevated Issue of Local Concern or Awareness-Ben Moser

For the elevated issue today let's take a look back at 2020

- The pandemic reshaped the United States in 2020. Millions of people tested positive. The death toll surpassed the population of St. Louis or Cincinnati. And even as the new year approached, the country continued to set records for cases and deaths.
- The country's first known coronavirus case was identified in January in Washington State, setting off a race to contain the virus. At first, life remained normal, with cases popping up in ones or twos, mostly in travelers. But testing was woefully inadequate.
- Within weeks, the scope of the problem was clear. Community transmission was detected for the first time in California. The virus was spreading widely.
- When the country abruptly shut down, no place fared worse than the Northeast. Even with scant testing, cases emerged by the thousands around New York City. In April, the country regularly saw 2,000 deaths a day.
- The virus has been devastating everywhere, but its impact has not been even. By late spring, it was clear that Black and Hispanic people were contracting the virus at higher rates than their white neighbors. Scientists hoped for a summer pause that never materialized. Sun Belt cities that avoided the worst of the spring surge set new records in June and July. The country averaged as many as 66,000 new cases a day.
- All autumn, the national outlook worsened. In November, there were more than 100,000 new cases a day. By mid-December, more than 200,000. Rural

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communities in the Midwest and West drove much of the growth. Deaths exceeded their spring peak.

- But unlike in the spring and summer, there was hopeful news, too. Regulators approved two vaccines that were developed in record time. More than two million people have already received a first dose, and tens of thousands more are getting shots every day. Still, scientists warned of a long, painful winter ahead. California is setting new case records. The South is in the middle of a new outbreak. And on the same day the first vaccine was administered, the country surpassed 300,000 total deaths.

Economic Sector and Impact Area Updates

Public:

Columbus Consolidated Government Update-Mayor Skip Henderson

Mayor Henderson gave the following updates:

- It is not surprising that positive cases are going up. We were told by medical experts to expect cases to rise in the winter months and with people continuing to gather in groups during the holiday season.
- Our threshold of the number of cases per 100,000 people over a two-week period is the highest that it has been.
- Our 7-day rolling average has been over 100 a day.
- Continuing to watch the hospitalization rate. The hospitals have done an amazing job of managing resources, caring for COVID-19 patients and caring for the community.
- The city has asked organizers of large events to postpone or scale back events. Organizers have agreed.
- Proud of the resiliency and empathy of this community and the way the community has approached the pandemic.
- The city will continue to enforce the governor's order. Public Safety will become more engaged with enforcement.
- There is a concerted effort (along with the Department of Public Health, hospitals, etc.) to stay connected for how the vaccine will be distributed as it becomes available. They are putting together a delivery strategy for the general public so that the vaccine is available for everyone that would like to receive it.
- Thanked everyone for what they are doing.

Muscoogie County School District Update-Dr. David Lewis

Dr. Lewis gave the following updates:

- Appreciates the support and patience of the community.
- The school district will continue the virtual learning model through January 15, 2021 based on the advice of their medical expert panel.
- The school district continues to monitor the local number of positive cases, hospital beds and hospital staff as well as the 7-day rolling average.
- The school district will continue serving meals at all schools. Students may go to the nearest school to pick up meals.

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- Meeting with the medical expert panel today at noon to access when the district can safely return to in person instruction. Appreciate all the guidance received from the medical community.
- The school district will continue to take the safe and prudent approach to ensuring the safety of students, staff and the community.

Non-Profit:

Food

Feeding the Valley Update-Frank Sheppard

Frank gave the following updates:

- Food distribution in Cusseta, Georgia (Chattahoochee County) today at the recycling center.
- Tomorrow's food distribution in four locations in Meriwether County, Georgia as well as four locations in Troup County, Georgia.
- During the week of Christmas, Feeding the Valley was able to conduct regular food distributions in Muscogee County, Georgia and Russell County, Alabama as well as an additional distribution in Muscogee County, Georgia in partnership with the Columbus Consolidated Government and Publix. 3,500 families were fed.

Health

St. Francis-Emory Healthcare Update-Melody Trimble

Melody gave the following updates:

- Today is day 299 of the hospital's COVID-19 Command Center.
- The number of hospitalizations is fluid.
- The hospital is prepared to take care of the needs of the community. Reminder to the community not to delay care.
- The hospital is doing well at recognizing and treating COVID-19 patients. However, it still takes the entire community to remain vigilant by wearing a mask, washing hands and social distancing. It is also important to maintain a positive attitude to remain resilient.
- Grateful that some of the hospital team members have received the vaccine.
- Appreciate and thankful for the hospital staff, all front-line workers and the community support.

Housing

Home for Good/United Way Update-Pat Frey

Pat gave the following updates:

- Continue to service the vulnerable population in collaboration with community partners.
- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Moratorium on evictions has been extended to January 31, 2021.
- Federal eviction prevention grant funding is on hold. However, an appeal to use these funds has been filed. Do not expect to hear anything until after the electoral college vote today. Will give updates as they become available.

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- Continuum of Care Semi-Annual Meeting, Thursday, February 11, 2021, 2:00pm-4:00pm EST
<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/ga-505-coc-semi-annual-meeting-registration-135700314293>
- Annual Point in Time Count (federally mandated count of individuals experiencing homelessness) is scheduled for February 16-17, 2021.
- Point in Time Count Volunteer Training, January 26-28, 2021, 8:00am
<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2021-point-in-time-count-training-tickets-135591324301>
- Point in Time Count Volunteer Training, January 26-28, 2021, 12:00pm
<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2021-point-in-time-count-training-tickets-135595121659>
- Point in Time Count Volunteer Training, February 2-4, 2021, 4:00pm
<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2021-point-in-time-count-training-tickets-135595633189>

Youth Services

United Way Agency Partners Update-Jennifer St John

Jennifer gave the following updates:

- United Way Agency Partners have services available to assist students and parents during this time of virtual learning in Muscogee County, Georgia.
- Programs are open during school hours. Students will be able to log-in/access their classrooms, have oversight supervision, access to meals and other organizational programming once the school day ends.
- All programs are operating on a limited basis with all safety protocols in place.
- The agencies that are open and accepting applications at this time are: Boys and Girls Club, Enrichment Services Program, Girls Inc. Open Door and Salvation Army.
- Additional information for other programs and other childcare services (for 6 weeks to 16 years) can be accessed by contacting agencies directly or contacting 211(706-405-4775) and speaking with an agent. Information can also be accessed by using the key word search "extended childcare" to find information on the website(211uwcv.org) or via text (text your zip code to 898211).
- A flyer is also posted on the United Way Facebook page with this information.
<https://www.facebook.com/unitedwaycv/photos/pb.136094579746357.-2207520000../3706044292751350/?type=3&theater>
- Also, for additional information contact Jennifer St John jestjohn@unitedwayofthecv.org or Candace Muncy cmuncy@unitedwayofthecv.org

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Grants/Projects Update-Betsy Covington

Betsy gave the following updates:

- The Coronavirus Response Fund continues to be available to help. The fund received generous year end giving donations.
- These donations have given the fund what hopes to be a healthy balance. However, there is no way to know how long the crisis will last and what the needs will be in the community. Very concerned about the eviction situation and how the funds may be able to help with that.
- So far to date the fund has made grants that total \$1,252,016. 41% has gone to health care related needs (this also includes grants for St. Francis and Piedmont), 19% towards food needs, 13% to support agencies that provide financial help to individuals, 6% towards housing and shelter, and 4% towards childcare and youth services.
- For details on grant awards, to donate or if you are a non-profit in need of assistance go to cfcv.com/coronavirus.

Making Connections (Open Forum)

St. Anne Outreach Update-Katie Byers

Katie gave the following updates:

- In December, St. Anne saw a surge in the number of people with eviction notices and seeking rental assistance. Their waiting list that normally takes an hour to fill up was full in 15 minutes.
- They are seeing four times the number of eviction notices that they would normally see in a month.
- Even though there is an eviction moratorium it is a national mandate and has no bearing in our local courts, so local courts are continuing to write eviction notices and having them served.
- Some clients have two to six months of rent in arrears.
- Due to the pandemic, St. Anne was debating whether to close during the holiday as they normally do. Thanked Feeding the Valley for keeping the community fed and allow St. Anne to close for two weeks so that their volunteers could rest. St. Anne served 16, 000 people in 2020.
- They have seen a 20% increase for request in groceries each month over the last three months.

Department of Public Health (Columbus Health Department) Update-Jack Lockwood

Jack gave the following updates:

- Registration for the COVID-19 vaccine is available on the West Central Health District website.

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<https://westcentralhealthdistrict.com/covid-19/covid-19-vaccine-information/>

- Registration for the vaccine is in phases. When the vaccine is available for your phase, public health will contact you. The reply time depends on the phase and vaccine availability.
- Latest numbers and statistics concerning COVID-19 can be found on the Georgia Department of Public Health website <https://dph.georgia.gov/covid-19-daily-status-report>
- COVID-19 information can also be found on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov).
- If anyone has any questions or needs public health information, Jack can be reached at 706-321-6115 or jack.Lockwood@dph.ga.gov

Salvation Army Update-Jason Smith

Jason gave the following updates:

- In December, Salvation Army was able to distribute toys and food to over 1,000 children in the Chattahoochee Valley thanks to their partnership with United Way and other community partners and agencies.
- Salvation Army is continuing to provide services during the pandemic.
- The Annual Red Kettle campaign was successful despite the pandemic thanks to the staff, volunteers and everyone in the community who donated.
- Salvation Army will be announcing a project later in the year for family sheltering.
- Grateful and thankful to everyone in the community for their support and for the opportunity to serve Columbus (Jason and his wife came to Columbus less than six months ago in the middle of the pandemic).