



**For Immediate Release  
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### **JEFFERSON COUNTY UNIFIED COMMAND CENTER UPDATES FOR MAY 1, 2020**

**Birmingham, AL** – The Jefferson County Unified Command Center (JCUC) and its partner agencies held a press conference at 11:30 am today to discuss the current state of the response to COVID-19. Dr. Mark Wilson, Jefferson County Health Officer, and Jim Coker, Director of Jefferson County Emergency Management Agency serve as the co-leaders of the Unified Command Center.

#### **Jefferson County Department of Health:**

While the state had not yet fully met the benchmarks recommended by the White House before lifting Stay at Home orders, the new statewide “Safer at Home Order” order does represent a measured and careful approach.

The main changes from before are:

- Allowances to open retail businesses at 50% of the normal allowable occupancy while following social distancing requirements and sanitation guidelines from the CDC.
- Allowing dental, medical and surgical procedures to proceed, unless the State Health Officer or designee determines that such procedures would unacceptably reduce access to personal protective equipment or PPE. I will be particularly interested in how this affects the demand and supply of PPE: our health department needs PPE to conduct the testing related to contact tracing, and we have a limited supply.

To make sure testing efforts are well-coordinated and guided by data and the best expertise available to us, the formation of a Countywide Testing Collaborative to guide and coordinate COVID-19 testing efforts going forward. This Collaborative will include three groups:

1. A small group of infectious disease, epidemiology and public health experts
2. A group representing various providers of community testing
3. A group of representatives from each of our five County Commission districts. This will ensure that we have some level of community input, assistance in choosing and supporting testing sites, and communication with political leaders and the public about the testing strategy.

Regardless of how fast or slow business activity and other activities increase, EVERYONE needs to continue to do everything they can to protect themselves and others from infection:

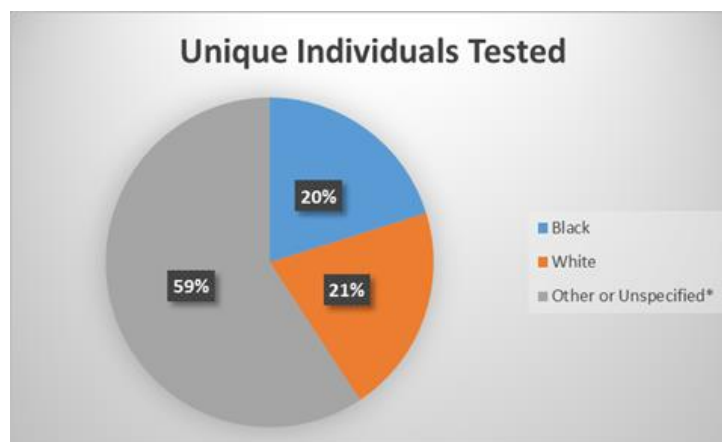
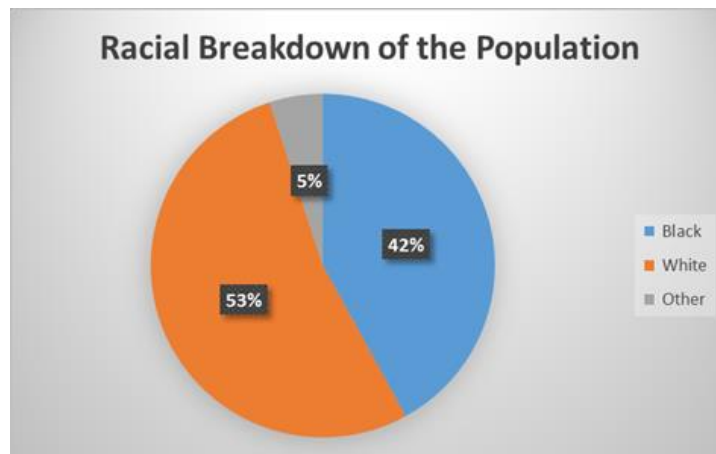
- Minimize travel outside the home
- Wear a face covering when around people from other households

- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water or hand sanitizer, especially after touching frequently used items or surfaces
- Refrain from touching your face until your hands are washed or sanitized
- Cover your sneezes and coughs with a tissue, or the inside of your elbow
- Disinfect frequently used items and surfaces often

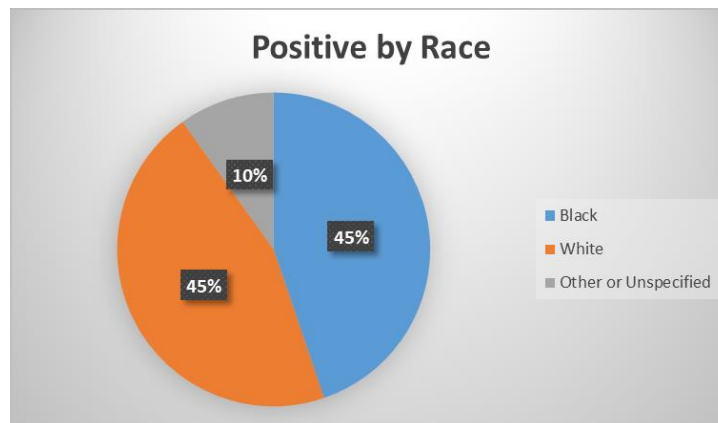
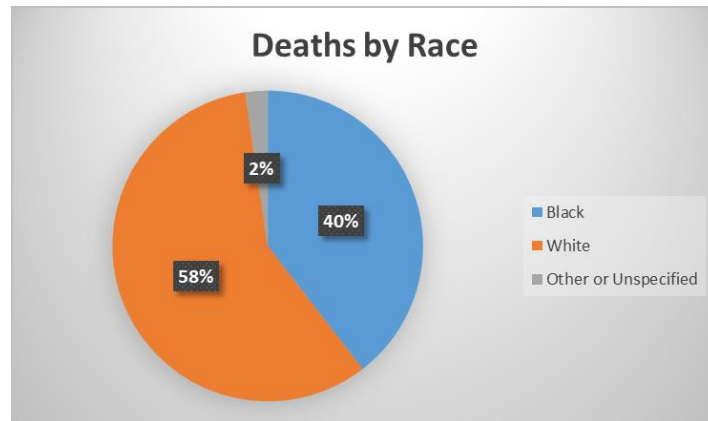
**REMEMBER: COVID-19 can be spread by people who have no symptoms, so everyone should act as if they or others around them may be infected.**

Everyone is going to have to get used to this new way of life for several months to come.

We have received expert statistical analysis documentation in order to meet HIPAA compliance.



\*Some labs do not report racial demographics with their test results, nor does JCDH collect this information for the negative results. \*



**UAB Medical:**

Dr. Nafziger presented on the current state of patient care of COVID-19 Positive patients at UAB hospital, as well as the therapies used for COVID-19, including Remdesivir. UAB is currently working on plans for reopening the hospital and out-patient clinics for normal operations.

**Jefferson County Commission:**

Jefferson County reopened its courthouse and satellite locations on May 1. We still are encouraging citizens to do as much online as possible such as tag renewals, permits, and license renewals. They can visit [www.jccal.org](http://www.jccal.org) and visit the FAQ at the top of the page for details.

- The County has implemented several protective measures for both the public and employees as follows:
  - New plexi-glass shields have been added to all public facing counters such as the Department of Revenue and Tax Assessors office.
  - All courthouse locations have been cleaned according to CDC guidelines.
  - Moving forward high traffic areas of the courthouses will be cleaned throughout the day and there will be overnight cleaning of departments.
  - Social distancing is required by those waiting for services. To help facilitate that at the downtown courthouse the front entrance on Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. will be closed and citizens will enter from the Linn Park side or second floor parking deck entrance.
  - The County is still encouraging remote work by employees where possible to ensure proper social distancing at the office and there will be no meetings of 10 people or more.

### **City of Birmingham:**

The City of Birmingham continues to be under a state of emergency. The state government has provided detailed recommendations and guidance as we move into the 'safer at home' plan. We still have a ways to go before we can return to normalcy. Therefore, it is important to remain vigilant at this time. As a reminder, social distancing is still in effect. We ask that you please stay at home as much as you can. It is recommended by state and county public health officials to wear face coverings in public. In Birmingham, face coverings are a mandate. Also, in support of our efforts to reopen retail, we have reduced our shelter-in-place ordinance to a daily curfew of 10 p.m. to 5 a.m. There are several exceptions to the curfew, which does not impact essential workers or businesses. If you are traveling for work, medical reasons, serving as a caretaker, or out to get food, you will be exempt. Again, this ordinance is to keep people off the streets and at home as much as possible.

### **Jefferson County EMA:**

The Unified Command has been working diligently in order to provide an effective response to COVID-19 within our community. This command structure has brought together various agencies such as the health department, city and county government departments, medical facilities, response agencies, corrections facilities, places of worship, homelessness advocates, and volunteer groups to work together in a unified structure in order to ensure a strong fight against COVID-19 as a community. Due to social distancing protocols, we have been able to conduct this entire response in a virtual manner, which has never been done.

- The first component that activated was a Joint Information Center. This information hub brought together Public Information officers together from many agencies across the county to ensure consistent messaging and communication across jurisdictional boundaries.
  - You can access the latest information by going to our website [www.jeffcoema.org](http://www.jeffcoema.org), and clicking the COVID-19 buttons at the top of our page. These web pages were put together in partnership with many of the agencies across the county.
- The Unified Command was tasked from the outset with several problems that needed rapid solutions. One of these tasks being community feeding. In the last week, The Central Alabama Food Bank and the Christian Service Mission has fed 69,309 families which amounted to 215,051 pounds of food. As of today, 2-1-1 has met all reported needs. If you need help or assistance with acquiring food or other problems, please reach out to 2-1-1 so you can obtain the assistance you need.

The Unified Command will continue to operate until the need ceases to exist.

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