

Memorandum



Date: February 17, 2022

To: Honorable Chairman Jose “Pepe” Diaz
and Members, Board of County Commissioners

From: Daniella Levine Cava
Mayor *Daniella Levine Cava*

Subject: Report Regarding Plan to Deliver Food and Medications During COVID-19 -
Directive 200695

The following report is provided pursuant to Resolution No. R-435-20, sponsored by Commissioner Rebeca Sosa, and adopted at the May 5, 2020 Board of County Commissioners (Board) meeting. The County Mayor or Mayor’s designee was directed to develop a plan to deliver food and medications to certain persons who (i) have tested positive for COVID-19, (ii) are in quarantine, (iii) meet specific criteria to demonstrate need, and (iv) opt to participate in the food and medication delivery program.

As part of my operation to catch up on the backlog of items, we are bringing you reports that were pending from the previous administration.

Resolution R-435-20 was adopted by the Board in the early stages of the pandemic. As the County commenced COVID-19 Emergency Orders, critical initiatives were implemented to ensure that our most vulnerable residents continued to receive needed services and resources, while being able to remain safe in their homes. While there was no singular effort focused on positive cases receiving medication and food, the previous administration quickly mobilized county departments to implement a number of initiatives that provided food and medication during the pandemic, as described below:

Meals and Food Distribution

The Community Action and Human Services Department (CAHSD) worked in collaboration with the Office of Emergency Management (OEM) and the Internal Services Department (ISD) to launch the County’s Emergency Meal Service (CEMS) program to provide prepared meals to prevent vulnerable County elderly residents from going hungry during the pandemic. The program operated for fifteen months and ended on June 30, 2021, delivering more than twenty-five million meals to the elderly since its inception. At the program’s highest peak, more than 82,000 seniors received daily nutritiously balanced meals.

The Office of Management and Budget provided oversight of \$5,587,963 in funding allocated to various nonprofits for the provision of numerous drive-through community food distribution events throughout the county and delivery in the South to migrant workers. Community-based organizations (CBOs) that received additional dollars via an amendment to existing CBO contracts included: Coalition of Florida Farmworkers Organizations; Curley’s House; Farm Share; Feeding South Florida; Joshua’s Heart Foundation; and Victory for Youth (Share Your Heart).

In April 2020, Miami-Dade Parks, Recreation and Open Spaces (PROS) began operating six drive-through food distribution sites strategically located throughout the county (North, Central, and

South) that fed approximately 6,000 families weekly. PROS, through partnerships with CBOs including but not limited to Farm Share and Feeding South Florida, has fed over 188,592 households at 250 food distribution events from April through December 2020. Selected examples of these include six food distribution events at Gwen Cherry Park between September 16, 2020 and December 2, 2020, implemented in collaboration with the Miami Marlins, the Marlins Foundation, the Miami Heat, and CBO Feeding South Florida, and which served approximately 3,000 families.

Alternative means for members of the community to receive food and resource support include assistance by governmental agencies through an application process and walk-up services operated by CBOs. To address those who cannot access food distribution sites with a vehicle, food assistance is available to the public by appointment and walk-up at different locations throughout the County. Many of these walk-up locations, sometimes referred to as food pantries, are CBO-supported, and offer food items available for patrons’ selection free of charge. The list of the food pantries aiding with walk-up services is updated on a weekly basis on the County’s COVID-19 website under food assistance.

Vaccination and Testing

Miami-Dade Fire Rescue (MDFR) continues to be the backbone of the County’s testing and vaccination efforts. MDFR began homebound vaccination on December 31st, 2020 and ended on June 13th, 2021. During that time period, over 1,900 homebound Miami-Dade County residents were vaccinated. The Florida Division of Emergency Management (FDEM) started home bound vaccinations on March 4, 2020 and discontinued them on June 16, 2020. The Florida Department of Health (FDOH) took over homebound vaccinations on June 16, 2020 and continues to provide the service. FDEM and FDOH have vaccinated over 1,000 homebound Dade County residents as of August 2021.

Through OEM, several initiatives were launched that focused on prevention and responsiveness. Under the direction of former Mayor Carlos A. Gimenez, OEM initiated the county-wide COVID-19 Hotel Isolation Program for residents and first responders who either tested positive or worked in an environment that regularly exposed them to COVID-19 and required isolation from their family while they continued to work. The program started on July 1, 2020 and closed on April 29, 2021. During this period of time the County provided isolation to 3,968 individuals. OEM, as part of their duties as Emergency Management for Miami-Dade County, also provided Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) beginning in the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020, and continues to do so for first responders countywide, including municipal Fire and Police, as well as hospitals, nursing homes, adult living facilities, long-term care facilities, general municipal and county employees, community based and faith based organizations, testing sites, and vaccination sites.

Helping Homeless Residents

The Miami-Dade County Homeless Trust (Trust) has been operating Quarantine and Isolation (Q&I) sites for persons experiencing homelessness since March 2020. An initial five sites have been scaled down to three. The largest of these sites receives food through a contract with MDFR. Beverages and snacks are also provided as needed using a combination of emergency purchases

and donated items. The remaining two Q&I sites receive food assistance through Chapman Partnership, the Trust’s private sector partner. More than 221,000 have been served to-date. From May to September 2020, as part of a program funded by the USDA, the Trust also partnered with Global Perishable Services, LLC to provide more than 13,080 20-pound produce boxes to shelters and project-based permanent housing programs supported by the Trust. Prescriptions for medications and refills at Q&I sites are often provided or facilitated through Camillus Health Concern which provides general health and behavioral health care for persons experiencing homelessness or facilitated through other non-profit providers and partners working with the Trust.

FDOH continues to be a strategic partner for the Trust, ensuring Q&I guests are tested for COVID-19 and vaccinated. As of August 2021, more than 5,800 intakes have occurred at Q&I sites with the Trust continuing to receive referrals from the jail, crisis units, area hospitals, and homeless outreach teams. Indoor meal programs, some of which are funded through the Trust, never ceased to provide meals during the pandemic and continue to serve unsheltered persons. Outreach and specialized outreach teams also continue to provide shelf-stable food items, identification assistance, medication management, mental health counseling, and educational information on social distancing to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

CAHSD transitioned its longstanding center-based programming, including Adult Day Care and Congregate Meals, to home-delivered services. In addition to meals delivered on a weekly basis, enrolled residents received telephone reassurance and case management services, including medication management. CAHSD staff, along with contracted medical staff, worked closely with physicians and caretakers to ensure that prescriptions were refilled timely, medications were administered consistently, and families were supported. Without interruption, CAHSD also continued to provide in-home care for homebound residents, including bathing, toileting, light chores, and shopping assistance for groceries and important household items.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact Sonia Grice, Director, Community Action and Human Services Department, at (786) 469-4616.

Per Ordinance No. 14-65, this report will be placed on the next available Board committee meeting agenda.

- c: Geri Bonzon-Keenan, County Attorney
- Gerald Sanchez, First Assistant County Attorney
- Jess McCarty, Executive Assistant County Attorney
- Office of the Mayor, Senior Staff
- Sonia Grice, Director, Community Action and Human Services Department
- David Clodfelter, Director, Office of Management and Budget
- Maria Nardi, Director, Parks, Recreation and Open Spaces Department
- Alan Cominsky, Director, Miami-Dade Fire Rescue
- Victoria Mallette, Executive Director, Homeless Trust
- Jennifer Moon, Chief, Office of Policy and Budgetary Affairs
- Yinka Majekodunmi, Commission Auditor
- Melissa Adames, Director, Clerk of the Board

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Eugene Love, Agenda Coordinator, Office of the Agenda Coordination