

## U.S. NEWS

# Deaths Rising At Florida's Senior Homes

By ARIAN CAMPO-FLORES

MIAMI—Florida was one of the earliest states to lock down elder-care facilities in the coronavirus pandemic, and the move helped stave off widespread deaths at such centers in the spring. But as the state contends with a surge of new infections, those defenses have faltered, triggering a fresh round of government interventions.

Daily fatality counts from elder-care facilities in Florida climbed to their highest level so far in the past week, with the seven-day average reaching 56 on Monday, about triple the average a month ago, according to an analysis of state data by The Wall Street Journal. Total long-term-care deaths rose to 3,155 on Monday, representing about 42% of the state's 7,526 fatalities overall, in line with the national trend. Confirmed cases among long-term-care residents have plateaued in recent days.

In June, the state began requiring facilities to test staff every two weeks. But public-health specialists say that unless the centers test staff, vendors and others for the virus every time they arrive, there is no way to fully protect the elderly residents. Staff members may become infected at home but not show symptoms,

and then come in close contact with residents.

About one in five residents in Florida is a senior citizen—the highest proportion in the U.S., along with Maine. Florida initially appeared to dodge the worst of the pandemic. Then new infections began soaring in June, peaking in mid-July. Of 62 counties recently identified as viral “hot spots” by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, 24 are in Florida, including those containing Miami, Fort Lauderdale, Tampa and Orlando.

The intensity of outbreaks in elder-care facilities often mirrors that in the broader community, according to a study by Harvard University researchers. A Journal analysis of data from local public-health departments and facilities’ reports to a federal tracking system shows more than 64,800 Covid-19 deaths linked to long-term care centers since the pandemic began.

“The storm is here,” said Steve Bahmer, chief executive of LeadingAge Florida, an industry group that represents elder-care facilities. “It’s gathering intensity, and it’s putting enormous pressure on the providers who care for Florida’s most-vulnerable citizens.”

At Palm Garden Healthcare’s 14 Florida facilities, where 31 Covid-19-positive



A memorial for nursing-home patients and caregivers on June 18 in Tampa. Florida is contending with a new wave of coronavirus cases.

residents have died, administrators are intent on sealing off the centers from the outside world as best they can, said Luke Neumann, vice president of service and relationship development. The company set up isolation wings for infected patients in three facilities, tests staff and residents every two weeks and stocks a two-to-three-week supply of personal protective equipment, he said.

“We have essentially set up the closest thing to a virtual Covid wall,” Mr. Neumann said. “But what you can’t control is friends and family of caregivers.”

In St. Petersburg, Bon Secours Maria Manor Nursing Care Center resident Pat Ben-

del appeared to be faring well early in the pandemic, said granddaughters Brittany Babineau and Katelyn Keane. The 85-year-old Elvis Presley fan and skilled doll maker called them regularly and said she missed going out to lunch.

“They were in lockdown,” said Ms. Keane, 24. “We thought that she was safe.”

In late June, the family received a call from the facility saying Ms. Bendel had tested positive for the coronavirus, Ms. Babineau said. At first, she had a fever and a cough, but her condition worsened to the point she could communicate only by blinking or tilting her head.

On July 4, family members spent hours with her on Face-

Time, telling her stories and playing Elvis songs, until her heart stopped.

“It doesn’t feel real yet,” said Ms. Babineau, 27. A spokeswoman for Bon Secours Maria Manor, where 20 residents with Covid-19 have died, said the company doesn’t comment on individual patients for privacy reasons and follows federal and state safety protocols.

At the outset of the pandemic, Florida officials cut off virtually all visitation to long-term-care facilities, deployed support teams to train staff on infection control and sent them personal protective equipment. More recently, officials expanded the number of isolation centers to help segregate Covid-19-positive resi-

dents to 23 around the state.

“We’ve put more resources towards protecting our long-term care facilities than any state in the country from the very beginning,” Republican Gov. Ron DeSantis said last week.

Tatyana Prudinsky is keeping her distance from her mother, Sofia Polyakova, a resident of Palm Garden’s facility in Aventura, Fla., who so far has tested negative.

In July, they celebrated Ms. Polyakova’s 100th birthday on opposite sides of a glass wall.

“It’s very sad and frustrating,” said Ms. Prudinsky, 75. “But that’s life...We all have to be safe.”

—Jon Kamp  
contributed to this article.

## Drugmakers Start to Signal Prices for Covid-19 Vaccines

By PETER LOFTUS

New details are emerging about how much drugmakers are charging for coronavirus vaccines, with prices spanning from several dollars a dose to more than \$70 for a regimen.

Contracts with the U.S. and other governments announced

Wednesday price the shots across a wide range, from \$10 to \$37 a dose.

**Johnson & Johnson** said it agreed to provide 100 million doses of its Covid-19 vaccine for use in the U.S., in exchange for more than \$1 billion from the government, implying a per-dose price of about \$10.

**Moderna Inc.** said it signed small-volume supply contracts with governments at prices ranging from \$32 to \$37 a dose, which would mean a two-dose regimen could cost as much as \$74. Moderna didn’t disclose the countries, but Canadian officials said they signed a Moderna supply

agreement.

The contracts suggest drugmakers are making different calculations on pricing, as they race to develop a successful vaccine. **J&J** and **AstraZeneca PLC** have pledged not to earn a profit during the pandemic, while Moderna and **Pfizer Inc.** say they will.

**Pfizer** and partner **BioNTech SE** said Tuesday they signed a contract to supply doses of a Covid-19 vaccine to Canada, but didn’t disclose terms.

Under a deal announced last month, the U.S. agreed to pay Pfizer and BioNTech \$1.95 billion for 100 million doses,

which suggests a price of \$19.50 a dose and \$39 for two doses. AstraZeneca, meanwhile, agreed to provide 300 million doses to the U.S. for \$1.2 billion, implying a cost of \$4 a dose. An AstraZeneca spokesman said the funding also covers development and clinical testing.

### ADVERTISEMENT



## AMERICA'S BLUEPRINT FOR GROWTH IS A MATTER OF L'ATTITUDE

The first National Latino Economic Blueprint, developed to improve the prosperity, influence, and quality of life for U.S. Latinos, as well as for all Americans, will be released at L'ATTITUDE 2020. What are the growth factors key to the Restart and Rebound of the New Mainstream Economy? Do you have what it takes to grow from here?

Be at L'ATTITUDE 2020 to discover the who, what, where, and when about our country's economic growth in the 21st Century. Participate in the presentations, conversations, and interactions. Find out if you have the right L'ATTITUDE for the growth of your business.

Four days of content, critical to our economy, discussed by national leaders, live-cast everywhere. See the full agenda, this year's world-class participants, and register to be part of L'ATTITUDE 2020.

REGISTER AT [WWW.LATTITUDE.NET](http://WWW.LATTITUDE.NET)

L'ATTITUDE 