

## News

# Lowndes CEO & President Dymond Joins 130+ Florida Leaders Urging COVID-19 Protection

Press Release

Lowndes

08.03.2020

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William T. Dymond, Jr.

Lowndes CEO and President **William T. Dymond, Jr.**, is among more than 130 CEOs from throughout Florida who signed a powerful op-ed piece urging everyone's conscientious adherence to safety protocols, including wearing face coverings, proven to be effective in keeping each other safe from COVID-19.

The piece has been reprinted in the multiple publications throughout Florida, including *Daily Commercial*, *Ocala StarBanner*, *Orlando Business Journal*, *Orlando Sentinel*, *Sarasota Herald Tribune*, *Sun Sentinel*, *Tampa Bay Business Journal* and WINK News.

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The Covid-19 virus is testing our resolve, and the numbers here in Florida tell an extremely concerning story.

By every key metric, our state has recently been reaching record levels on an almost daily basis. These include the number of new Covid-19 cases, and the percentage of those tested for Covid-19 who are positive. Our hospitalization rates are alarming. Since March 1, Florida has reported more than 400,000 Covid-19 total cases and over 5,500 deaths.

As leaders serving Florida, we are urgently asking our community, to join us in renewing our commitment to following safety guidelines, recommended by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, to stop the spread of Covid-19 and prevent more people from getting infected, becoming sick or unfortunately even dying. We all need to take personal responsibility to do the right thing for ourselves and one another to avoid our community experiencing an even more severe impact from COVID-19 like we have seen in other parts of our country.

The most effective way to prevent the spread of Covid-19 is to avoid being exposed in the first place. There are simple steps we can take to effectively reduce the risk of transmission and turn the tide in our community.

1. **Wear a mask when you're outside of your home.** Wearing masks should not be a controversial or a divisive issue. Masks can help save lives, just like seatbelts, traffic lights and life vests. Multiple studies, including a recent article in the Annals of Internal Medicine, show that individuals with no symptoms or mild symptoms can transmit the virus to others. But wearing simple cloth masks can stop more than 90 percent of the droplets that transmit the virus.
1. **Practice social distancing.** Where possible, keep at least six feet between you and other people outside your home. Remember, even people who do not appear sick can still spread the virus to you if you are too close. Avoiding close proximity to other people will help to reduce the risk of the virus spreading.
1. **Wash hands frequently.** Washing your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after being in public or blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing, can help stem the spread. If soap and water is not available, use a hand sanitizer with at least 60 percent alcohol. Always avoid touching your mouth, nose and eyes with unwashed hands.
1. **Avoid the three Cs.** The World Health Organization has recommended avoiding "Crowded" places with many people nearby, "Close" contact settings where people have close range conversations, and "Confined," enclosed places with poor ventilation. If you do make the decision to gather with others, it is much safer to do so outdoors rather than indoors.

In addition to these important preventative measures, there are ways for those who have contracted and fully recovered from COVID-19 to help combat the virus. Individuals who fully recover have antibodies to the disease that researchers believe can potentially help people with severe Covid-19 fight the virus. If you fall within this category, talk to your primary care physician about whether donating convalescent plasma through your local blood donation center is an option for you.

We know these tactics to fight Covid-19 work because we have seen them successfully deployed here in Florida and in other states and countries. Spikes like those we are experiencing have been overcome through concerted efforts that adhere to proven approaches.

We are leaders from business, community organizations, and health care and academic institutions. Our perspective is based solely on research and science. Our role is to help guide and protect the public health and well-being of our community.

Working together, we can take simple but important steps to protect one another and bring the virus under control throughout Florida. Feeling safe and being safe will be the cornerstones of our economic recovery as health and prosperity are inextricably linked. Now more than ever, our collective actions will dictate our shared future.

Signed:

- Pat Geraghty, president and CEO, GuideWell Mutual Holding Corporation & Florida Blue
- The Board of Directors, GuideWell Mutual Holding Corp. & Florida Blue
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- Jason Barrett, president and CEO, Flagler Hospital
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- Henry Brown, CEO, Miller Electric
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- Ravi Chari, president and CEO, HCA Healthcare West Florida Division
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