

CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC IN FLORIDA

Road to a million, a case study

Early optimism, indecision, then fatigue; now a scary spike

BY JACK EVANS AND KATHRYN VARN
Times Staff Writers

One million coronavirus cases. Florida is on track to hit that mark within days, the most staggering milestone in the virus' deadly spread across the state. On Friday, the total stood at 979,020, at a time when the toll hovers around 8,000 cases a day. In a year that has felt like a decade, and with "pandemic fatigue" a regular part of the lexicon, it can be hard to recall how we got here. But jog your memory: Remember when there were just a handful of confirmed cases? When testing wasn't just a

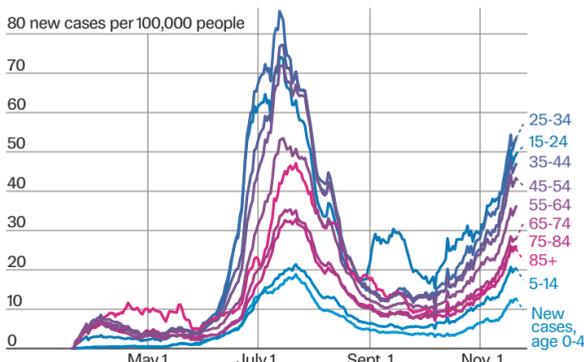
drive-through away? When people told each other, "If we can just make it through April..." It all started just nine months ago:

March 1: First and second cases

It was going to happen. Florida made it more than a month without a coronavirus diagnosis after the first one in the U.S. — someone who had traveled to China and was diagnosed in Washington state on Jan. 20 — but the virus was in America. See **CORONAVIRUS, 12A**

Florida coronavirus cases rising in all age groups

The increase started in October.



Rolling seven-day average of new cases per day per 100,000 people. Excludes cases reported Sept. 1. Source: Florida Department of Health LANGSTON TAYLOR | Times

Data analysis

Hospitalizations, cases, death all on rise in Florida

BY LANGSTON TAYLOR
Times Staff Writer

Heading into Thanksgiving weekend, Florida is home to rising coronavirus cases (in all age groups), hospitalizations and deaths. One thing to remember: around holidays, data on the virus can get "weird," as the COVID Tracking Project puts it. That means numbers of cases or deaths may quickly dip, even if that doesn't reflect changes in real life.

reflect data confirmed the day before. So, especially when it comes to deaths, numbers on Sundays and Mondays are much lower than other days of the week. And that holds for the days immediately after holidays: reported deaths plummeted on the Tuesdays after Memorial Day and Labor Day.

Florida's daily updates

In addition to whatever reporting oddities may arise, the numbers may look different soon for another reason: Experts warn that mild See **ANALYSIS, 11A**

Census rises to high court

Undocumented immigrants at heart of government's case.

BY GREG STOHR
Bloomberg News (TNS)

President Donald Trump's administration has one last showdown at the Supreme Court over his immigration policies, and this one goes to the heart of how U.S. political power is allocated.

In an argument set for Monday, the administration will seek the right to exclude undocumented immigrants from the census count used to divvy up congressional seats and federal funds. The move would change more than two centuries of practice in a nation that always has counted non-citizen residents, even those in the U.S. illegally.

The administration is racing to finish the count, and submit a report to Congress, before Joe Biden is inaugurated to succeed Trump on Jan. 20. Critics say Trump is trying to manipulate the numbers at the expense of Democratic-leaning areas with high immigrant populations. The push could mean fewer seats for Texas, California and possibly New York and New Jersey.

"This case is about the basic constitutional requirements for how political representation is divided in this country," said Dale Ho, an American Civil Liberties Union lawyer. See **CENSUS, 17A**

'SPEAK OUT BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE'

The Florida Division of Emergency Management says someone hacked into a system and sent a message to some state emergency response personnel. **3A**

EVEN WITH USF LOSS, I-4 WAR IS NO SNORE

Rival Central Florida hands the Bulls their eighth defeat in a row, 58-46, in Tampa. Still, USF (1-8) and quarterback Jordan McCloud show some growth on offense. **1C**

Cold front Monday

8 a.m. Noon 4 p.m. 8 p.m.

70° 79° 80° 72°

10% chance of rain
More, back page of Sports



Shoppers line up early — spaced several feet apart — at the Target in Pinellas Park for Black Friday shopping. The retailer was closed on Thanksgiving. Photos by SARA DINATALE | Times



Kaitlyn Detwiler showed up at the Target an hour before the store opened Friday — by mistake — to get a Christmas gift for her mom. The teen was the first in line.

ON BLACK FRIDAY, THE GAP IS A MUST

For some Tampa Bay shoppers, the pandemic isn't a deterrent to lining up.

BY SARA DINATALE
Times Staff Writer

PINELLAS PARK Kaitlyn Detwiler wasn't trying to be the first person in line at Target.

She showed up at 6 a.m. Black Friday, an hour early, because she thought that's when Target opened. Usually, the front of a Black Friday line is made up of deal-hunting diehards, the kind who have

been waiting with lawn chairs and tents while others were eating their Thanksgiving dinners.

But Black Friday during the pandemic was more relaxed. There was still a line of about 30 people outside, but Target — like other big-box chains — spread out sales this year to discourage big crowds. They kept stores closed on Thanksgiving evening, which is when Black Friday sales had been kicking off the past few years.

Detwiler, 17, had never been Black Friday shopping alone but Target had a cookware set for half off. She wanted to get the pots and pans for her mother, who just got a new gas stove.

"She knows I'm here," Detwiler said from behind a black face mask. "But she thinks I'm trying to get a new Xbox. They don't even have them here, but she doesn't know that."

The new Sony PlayStation 5 and

Xbox Series X were definitely the hot commodity of the holiday shopping weekend. Target employees came out regularly to tell the line that the consoles they had in stock were already purchased online for in-store or drive-up pickup — a service Target has grown during the pandemic.

"Every time he comes out and says there's no more, there's people who leave the line," Detwiler said, chuckle. See **SHOPPERS, 8A**