



June 23, 2020

To: Distribution

From: Pandemic Working Group

Re: **COVID-19: Younger Populations ~ MLB ~ EU Border Control ~ Blood Type**

Infections Affecting Younger Populations. Bill Kuser called this to our attention yesterday - as reported in the Huffington Post (and widely on broadcast news), over the last week officials in Florida, Texas, Georgia, South Carolina and North Carolina have reported a rise in coronavirus cases among people in their 20's and 30's. In Florida alone, where the state recorded a record-high 4,040 new cases last Saturday, the median age for infected persons has dropped from 65 to 36 over the past three months. Florida's Governor, Ron DeSantis, who has been among the more laissez faire governors in responding to the pandemic, called this a "radical direction" and a "cause for concern," noting that, while testing has increased, so has positivity (positive cases per total number of tests). The governor cited "social distancing fatigue" as a cause for the trend and, to his credit, warned that, while many younger persons may be largely symptomatic, they risk spreading the disease to older and more vulnerable populations. This photo, courtesy of Sopa Images via Getty Images, shows a water park in Orlando over the weekend, where distancing is apparently observed in the breach. Despite his own warning, however, the governor is apparently staying the course on reopening his state.



MLB Gets to First Base. The crack of the bat, a cloud of dust as the baserunner steals second, the roar of the umpire - the sights and sounds of major league baseball are still absent from the scene. As reported by Yahoo Sports, what started as a pandemic pause degenerated into a months-long disputation between management and the players' union, culminating in the players rejecting a proposed 60 game schedule (players wanted 70 games) followed by MLB management announcing yesterday that it would simply force a 60 game season. Players were given 24 hours to say whether they can report by July 1 and whether they will agree to the new COVID-centric operating manual. Newsflash - as of about an hour ago, (as reported by the Cincinnati Enquirer) New York Mets star Pete Alonso tweeted, "Baseball is back baby!!" signaling that MLB players have accepted the proposal. Players will report to their training sites for COVID testing on July 1, start the season around July 24 and then have 66 days to play 60 games through September 27 (which seems a little tight). Come July, then, the long-awaited opening day should arrive, and with it, the sights and sounds of America's favorite pastime.

EU May Continue to Block US Travelers. The New York Times reports that, while preparing to reopen its bloc to outsiders on July 1, the European Union is likely to continue blocking American visitors, along with those from Russia and Brazil, from entry due to concerns about coronavirus contagion. As you may recall, the US blocked non-resident travelers from the EU starting in mid-March when that region was the epicenter of the pandemic and domestic cases numbered about 1,100. Since that time, according to Worldometers.com, US cases have hit about 2.4 million with about 30,000 new cases per day, while, according to the ECDC the EU has had about 1.2 million cases, but only about 3,000 cases per day (as reported by TheHill.com). For the record, travelers from the US and other countries have been generally excluded from visiting the EU since mid-March. Interestingly, even though the EU has largely curbed the outbreak, the US has retained its exclusion of EU travelers. Countries on the EU's "safe list" include those that can show infection averages per 100,000 persons (over a trailing 14-day period) approximating that of the EU bloc, which is at 16. At present, the US is at 107, while Brazil is at 190 and Russia is at 80. European officials continue to debate this politically delicate matter, weighing in the balance the relative benefit of revenue from foreign tourists. These officials add that, once finalized, the list will be subject to revision every two weeks.

Coronavirus and Blood Type. Now this is interesting – as reported by TheHill, a new study that was published in the New England Journal of Medicine on June 17 suggests that blood type may play a role in a person's chances of contracting coronavirus. In the study, scientists analyzed the genetic information of 1,980 patients who had tested positive for the virus in several hospitals across Italy and Spain. The results showed a 45 percent higher risk of infection for those with blood type A versus other blood types and an apparent "protective effect" among those with type O blood. The study is limited and not dispositive. In fact, hematologist Roy Silverstein says, "Those who are not type A should not interpret this study to mean that they can let their guard down." So, what, if any consolation can we with type A blood take from this study? Well, frankly, none, but I did find that that, according to endmosquitoes.com (which sounds like a militant group dedicated to fighting a subgroup of insects), the type A blood group is least attractive to mosquitoes, while type O is most attractive. And with this knowledge, I, for one, feel a little better.



If you have any questions or comments on this advisory, please contact either kellyw@amvac.com or timd@amvac.com.