



PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Health Foundation of South Florida, Miami-Dade County and a Coalition of Chambers of Commerce Launch Effort to Encourage COVID-19 Vaccinations

The program calls on small businesses to take the “*We Did It*” pledge to help protect South Florida’s workers and to reignite the regional economy by promoting safety for employees, customers and the community.

MIAMI, Oct. 21, 2021 — The Health Foundation of South Florida, Miami-Dade County, the Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce and the Coalition of Miami-Dade Chambers of Commerce have joined forces to launch the “We Did It” pledge, a program that calls on the region’s small businesses to encourage employees to be

vaccinated against COVID-19. The voluntary program's aim is to help protect the local workforce as a means of bolstering the local economy and promoting South Florida as a safe place to travel and do business.

The "We Did It" pledge calls on businesses to commit to doing their part in three simple ways:

1. Encourage employees to be vaccinated to help ensure safe, healthy workplaces;
2. Protect South Florida's workers, customers and communities;
3. Reignite South Florida's economy by helping to build consumer confidence.

The initiative—with the backing of more than 20 local chambers of commerce and other private sector associations, representing companies from Aventura to Homestead—launches on the heels of the recently announced federal mandate for all enterprises with 100 or more employees to require vaccines or weekly testing. However, in Miami-Dade, a whopping 97 percent of businesses have *fewer* than 100, employees, and the vast majority have under five, but employ more than 70 percent of the Miami Dade workforce and are critical to ensure the success of any countywide COVID safety initiatives.

The pledge program was unveiled at a special event on Oct. 21 hosted by the Health Foundation CEO Loreen Chant and featuring remarks by Miami-Dade Mayor Daniella Levine Cava, Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce President and CEO Alfred Sanchez, Coalition of Miami-Dade Chambers of Commerce Co-chair Mark Trowbridge, Beacon Council President and CEO Michael Finney, Greater Miami Convention and Visitors Bureau Vice President Gisela Marti and Melissa Dunn of Dukunoo Jamaican Kitchen in Wynwood, where the event took place.

"South Florida's post-pandemic recovery depends not just on more residents getting vaccinated—it depends on our small businesses being stabilized and reignited," said Loreen Chant, President and CEO of the Health Foundation of South Florida. "We are thrilled to see some of the private sector's most important voices stand up to support this program, which is aligned with the Foundation's strategic focus on improving the social and economic community conditions that promote physical, mental, and emotional well-being."

“Our efforts to stop the spread and protect our community from COVID are working as we see the positivity rate and hospitalizations decline. We need to continue moving forward on all fronts – not only to beat the virus but to build a stronger economy and community after this pandemic,” says Miami-Dade Mayor Daniella Levine Cava. “Through this campaign we’re working hand in hand with small businesses to ensure we leave no communities behind in our vaccination efforts and to ensure a strong and long-lasting economic recovery.”

“It is impossible to overstate the importance of the stability and health of Miami-Dade’s small business sector because it is the engine of our local economy,” said Alfred Sanchez, President and CEO of the Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce. “Ensuring we have a healthy workforce not only helps businesses be more productive and less disrupted, it also fosters a sense of safety and confidence for customers.”

“From the upper reaches of Miami-Dade County down to its southernmost tip, the small business community will play an important part in making sure our economy is reignited and reinvigorated,” said Mark A. Trowbridge, President and CEO of the Coral Gables Chamber of Commerce, and co-chair of the Coalition of Miami-Dade Chambers of Commerce. “Now it is our turn to step up as a business community and demonstrate what we can do when we come together.”

Businesses that want to take the pledge can go to WeDidItSFL.com to download signs, stickers, email templates, web badges, social media, posters and other marketing materials to help them communicate and display their commitment to the health of their employees and customers — and to creating a safe environment in which business and commerce can thrive. They will also be able to access information, ideas and resources to help them promote or facilitate vaccines among employees, as well as a certificate from Miami-Dade Mayor Daniella Levine Cava.

Encouraging employees to be vaccinated or helping them get vaccinated, can benefit a small business because it:

- Keeps workers healthy;
- Reduces sick days, prevents a loss of productivity due to staffing shortages;
- Improves morale and employee safety;
- Projects a sense of confidence and safety to customers and clients.

Research has also shown that businesses, especially an individual's employer, are the most trusted resource on information regarding COVID-19. The recent 2021 Edelman Trust Barometer shows that the business community is the most trusted institution regarding information on the pandemic—outpacing NGOs, government and the media. The study also showed business held a 61 percent trust level globally, with 86 percent of respondents encouraging CEOs and employers to get involved in the conversation.

The “We Did It” Pledge program is an extension of the “I Did It” campaign, a vaccine education initiative developed in April by the Health Foundation of South Florida in partnership with Miami-Dade and Broward Counties designed to reach some of the region's most vulnerable neighborhoods that have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic.

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ABOUT HEALTH FOUNDATION OF SOUTH FLORIDA

The mission of Health Foundation of South Florida is to invest in and be a catalyst for collaborations and policy and systems changes that improve the health of South Florida communities, with a focus on vulnerable, low to moderate-income populations. Established in 1993, the foundation has awarded more than \$131 million to nonprofits that provide programs and services in Broward, Miami-Dade and Monroe Counties. For more information, visit www.hfsf.org or follow us on Twitter @HealthSFL.