

EDUCATION

FIU, MDC lend ventilators during coronavirus to help stop hospital supply shortages

BY MICHELLE MARCHANTE AND COLLEEN WRIGHT

APRIL 08, 2020 09:58 PM, UPDATED 41 MINUTES AGO

SHARE

FIU has made 28 ventilators available for efforts to treat the growing number of COVID-19 patients in Florida.
BY PEDRO PORTAL

First Florida recruited 100 professors and students from five universities to help learn about COVID-19 and how it's spreading. Now it's asking colleges and universities to lend its medical equipment to help those on the front lines of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Two South Florida schools have already responded to the call.

Florida International University gave its 28 ventilators to Florida emergency coordinators Wednesday afternoon to help meet a growing demand for supplies as hospitals try to avoid shortages. Besides personal protective equipment, ventilators are one of the most sought-after medical supplies for hospitals across the country.

The machines take over the body's breathing process when a patient's lungs fail. The equipment does not guarantee survival from COVID-19, the disease caused by the novel coronavirus. But it gives the patients' bodies time to fight off the infection and possibly recover.

Dennis Carroll, who led the U.S. Agency for International Development's infectious disease unit for more than a decade, told USA Today that about one-third of COVID-19 patients on ventilators survive.

The FIU-owned ventilators are part of the school's training and response equipment and will be distributed by the state to hospitals that are short in supply. Some of the machines were previously purchased with a grant FIU had received from the federal government, an FIU spokeswoman said.



Here are some of the ventilators that Florida International University is lending to the state to be used to treat patients affected by Covid-19, the disease caused by the coronavirus, on Wednesday, April 8, 2020. Pedro Portal PPORTAL@MIAMIHERALD.COM

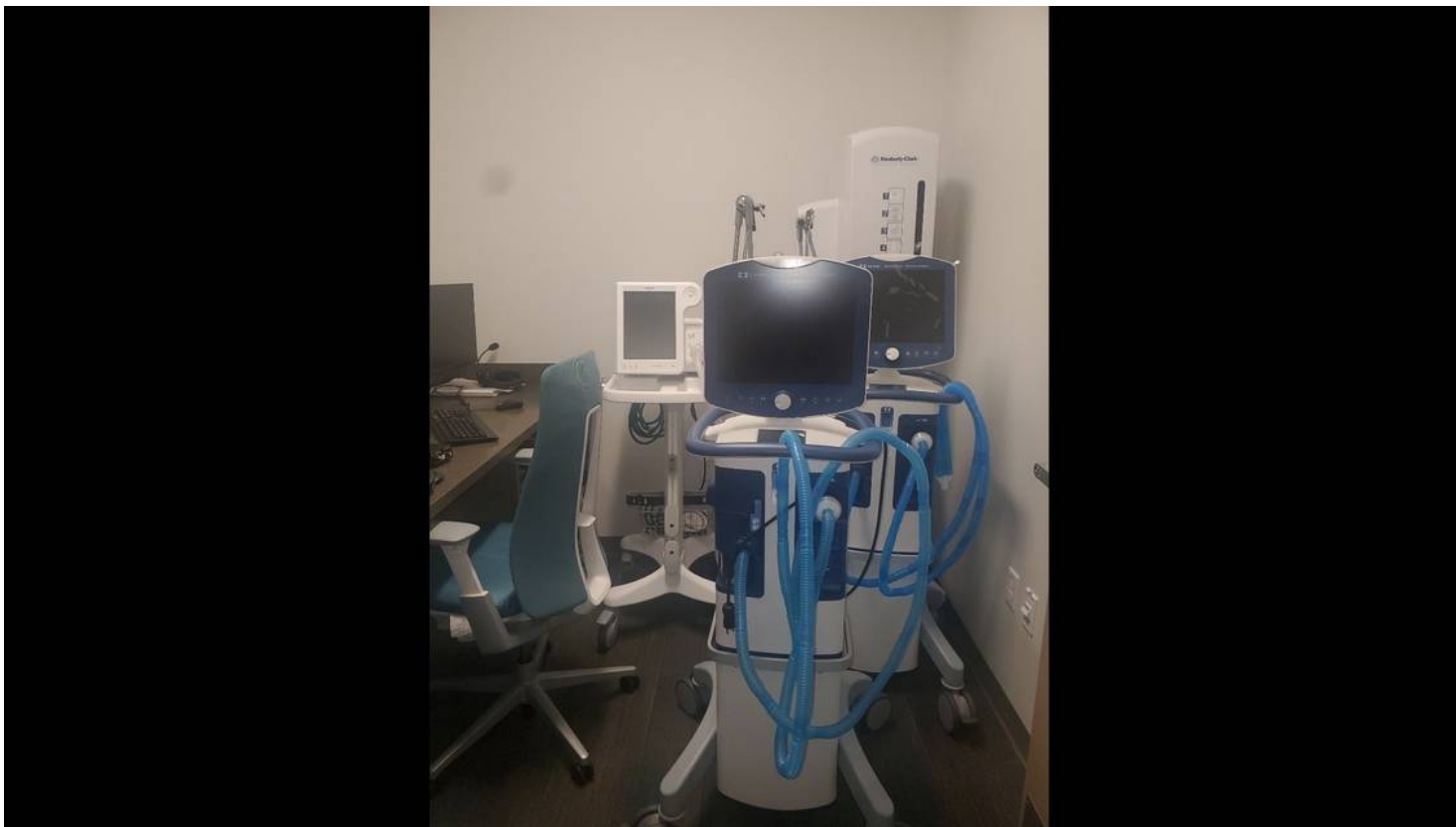
“At FIU, we are marshaling all of our resources to help our brave medical professionals and our community in this fight against COVID-19,” said FIU President Mark B. Rosenberg in a statement. “Making these crucial devices available goes along with our other efforts, which include producing personal protective equipment and providing clinical services at a coronavirus test site.”

Miami-Dade College’s medical campus is also lending 17 ventilators it uses for hands-on teaching to its next-door neighbor, Jackson Memorial Hospital. Between FIU and MDC, there are now 45 additional ventilators available for patients in the state.

MDC reviewed its inventory after Florida Education Commissioner Richard Corcoran urged all college presidents to see what they could lend to hospitals, said Dr. Bryan Stewart, president of MDC’s medical campus.

That’s when Stewart received a call from MDC Interim President Rolando Montoya, who arranged for Jackson’s director of respiratory care to come to campus to review the equipment Wednesday.

All but three ventilators were used by students in the college’s respiratory care program. Stewart said 50 students are admitted to that program every year, and students use the ventilators to become familiar with the equipment.



Miami-Dade College's medical campus is loaning its 17 ventilators used for hands-on teaching to its next-door neighbor, Jackson Memorial Hospital during the COVID-19 pandemic. *COURTESY OF MIAMI-DADE COLLEGE*

The other three ventilators were used in the college's simulation hospital, a \$58 million building built last July. They've only been used for a semester and a half.

"As a college, we think our equipment is really great and state of the art but compared to a hospital system, which is used for more functional equipment, ours is used to teach on," Stewart said. "The gentleman came over and was so excited and praised what high quality equipment we had."

Two of the ventilators are for pediatric patients. Those will be used for the Holtz Children's Hospital at Jackson. The rest will arrive by Friday as the hospital works out the logistics of transporting the equipment.

There's no rush for Jackson to return the ventilators, which cost several hundred thousand dollars. Students are learning remotely with purchased software that gives a simulation experience.

"We needed to help Jackson Hospital just as much as we needed to take care of our students, so it was an easy decision," Stewart said.

WHAT ARE SOUTH FLORIDA UNIVERSITIES DOING TO FIGHT COVID-19?

- The University of Miami said its equipment is being used to maintain a stockpile of supplies for its University of Miami Health System patients who may need it. The University of Miami Health System, which is treating COVID-19 patients, is also sharing and trading resources — including personal protective equipment such as N95 masks — with other hospitals, as well as vendor information.
- A group of UM medical school students did start offering services such as child care and meal delivery to doctors and nurses and created a phone bank to call businesses and ask for donations.
- FIU faculty and staff are also creating medical-grade face shields using 3D-printed designs to help extend the longevity of masks.
- Barry University is allowing 17 students to graduate early, joining a list of higher education institutions like New York University and Columbia, to help health professionals care for COVID-19 patients.

FOLLOW MORE OF OUR REPORTING ON CORONAVIRUS IMPACT IN FLORIDA

CORONAVIRUS

CORONAVIRUS

Will you still get parking or red-light camera tickets during coronavirus? It depends

APRIL 09, 2020 6:30 AM

Air travel hits a record low not seen since the early 1960s and 9/11, experts say

APRIL 08, 2020 8:44 PM

SEE ALL 9 STORIES



FIU staff members Javier Marquez (second from left), vice president and chief of staff, and Bridget Pelaez (center), FIU assistant director, Emergency, load a set of ventilators that Florida International University is lending to the state to treat patients affected by the COVID-19 outbreak, on Wednesday, April 8, 2020.
 PEDRO PORTAL PPORTAL@MIAMIHERALD.COM



MICHELLE MARCHANTE



305-376-2708

Real Time/Breaking News Reporter. There's never a dull moment in Florida — and I cover it. Graduated with honors from Florida International University. Find me on Twitter [@TweetMichelleM](https://twitter.com/TweetMichelleM)