

Florida med schools cancel 'Match Day' due to coronavirus

The highly anticipated national event where future doctors learn where they will train as residents is off at the University of South Florida, the University of Central Florida and Florida State University.



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Three of Florida's largest universities have canceled their Match Day, a highly anticipated event set for March 20 where future doctors at schools nationwide learn where they will train as residents.

The University of South Florida announced its cancellation Friday, saying students will be notified about their matches privately. The event originally was planned to be held on a stage outside Tampa's waterfront Ulele restaurant.

"We would not be taking this step unless it was necessary to ensure your, your families and the public at large's health and wellbeing," USF Health vice president Charles Lockwood wrote in an email to students. "Student safety is our number one priority."

USF students will still receive their matches March 20, possibly electronically, Lockwood wrote. More information is forthcoming.

Florida State University also called off its event Friday, in an email to students: "As much as we would like to salvage this important day for you, there are too many entities that have already canceled similar events. ... We want to share your joy, just not in person."

FSU students will still get envelopes containing their residency locations, but they will open them at smaller events on the school's regional campuses rather than in a big group inside the main campus' Ruby Diamond Concert Hall.

Officials are working to livestream those events so all students can be together virtually, the announcement said. Students at campuses outside of Tallahassee are asked not to visit the city.

“This national crisis is bigger than all of us,” the announcement reads. “The decision is not easy but we cannot risk bringing large numbers of people to Tallahassee for this event. ... Keep our nation in your prayers. The medical system is likely to be challenged over the next month as case numbers increase daily.”

The University of Central Florida announced cancellation of its Match Day, which about 1,000 people were set to attend, late Friday afternoon. Students there are instructed to either pick up their match envelopes at the Student Affairs office, ask that office to send them an email with their match results or go online to receive them at 1 p.m. on March 20.

Officials at the University of Florida did not immediately respond to an inquiry about the school’s Match Day event.

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