

# The pandemic's impact on local families



PALM BEACH COUNTY, Fla. — According to an ongoing NBC count, the US has now surpassed one million COVID-19 related deaths.

It's perhaps the grimmest milestone of the pandemic.

However, one million is much more than just a number for so many Americans.

**Bonnie Heatzig**, a Boca Raton resident, remembers her mother who passed away in July 2020.

It was very tragic.

“It’s very unfortunate,” **Heatzig** said. “She would have been the first one in line to get the vaccination, but that was not an option at the time, and she contracted COVID-19. She did have Parkinson's so she was vulnerable. There were many challenges.”

Those challenges included the inability for **Heatzig's** mother to communicate with family. Strict visitation policies in the hospitals forced families to say goodbye to their loved ones from a distance.

“It was very tragic,” **Heatzig** said. “Very tragic, very difficult.”

*REMEMBERING LOVED ONES 🙏❤️✨ Covid's toll in the U.S. reaches a once unfathomable number: 1 million deaths*

*Hear from families who share their most challenging moments during the pandemic as they continue to mourn the loss of their loved ones [pic.twitter.com/4gBnQOHFry](https://pic.twitter.com/4gBnQOHFry)*

*— Linnie Supall WPTV (@LinnieSupall) May 6, 2022*

In Belle Glade, Lisa Wilson continues to mourns the loss of her grandmother, Lille Mae, who passed away last summer.

Lillie Mae was one of several relatives who died from the virus.

“It was so terrifying. My aunt called me one Sunday morning and she said something is wrong with her.” Wilson said. “She was laid across the bed, and she was like, gasping for air. She was gasping for air.”

In all, Lisa Wilson has six relatives who were claimed by COVID-19.

"It was very, very hard," Wilson said. "Everyone was just confused about the whole situation."

Lisa Wilson and her husband Steve, the mayor of Belle Glade, continue to advocate and educate the community about getting the COVID-19 vaccine.