



July 5, 2020

Governor Greg Abbott
P.O. Box 12428
Austin, Texas, 78711
Sent via email.

Dear Governor Abbott,

As a follow up to my previous letter of June 27th, and given the increasing COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations in Dallas County and North Texas, the Public Health Committee comprised of epidemiologists, infectious disease doctors, hospital executives, physician leaders, and public health leaders, have suggested some additional mitigation methods.

The following are the recommendations of the committee as well as the science and public health principles to support them:

In the past week, the following metrics the committee and other experts use to assess the progression of the pandemic and the impact of our prevention measures (data from Dallas County Health and Human Services (DCHHHS) and the North Central Texas Trauma Regional Advisory Committee) show continued worsening including an:

1. *Increase to 33% positivity for SARS-CoV-2 testing.*
2. *A 23.3% increase in COVID-19 suspected admissions in Dallas County hospitals and a 14.5% increase in those cases in ICUs.*
3. *Multiple hospital systems are reporting the largest volumes of COVID-19 patients since the beginning of the pandemic.*

Given the evidence of widespread transmission in the community, we must strive to protect those high-risk individuals who are at risk of severe complications of COVID-19. These include those 65 years and older, those who live in a nursing home or long-term care facility, and people of all ages with an underlying medical condition.

Because of this significant increase in cases and the potential impact on the healthcare system and the residents of Dallas County, health experts and I recommend the following measures be implemented immediately with the imposition of additional penalties above those proscribed by the current orders:

1. *Limit high-risk events and in-and out-door gatherings of more than 10 people that could lead to additional COVID-19 transmission.*
2. *We once again strongly urge the closing of bowling alleys, arcades, amusement parks, venues for concerts, sporting arenas, weddings or other large events, inside restaurant*

dining, movie theatres, gyms (to include yoga and spin studios, etc.), group youth sports, public pools, day camps and day care centers for non-essential workers, and other social venues or activities that cannot enforce strict physical distancing or masks be strictly worn 100% of the time (i.e., cigar bars).

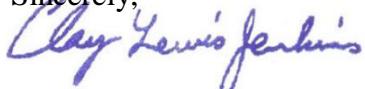
3. *Avoid in-person attendance at faith-based services. Utilize virtual methods such as live streaming, or other social media-based platforms, for continuance of faith practices. If in person attendance occurs, all participants should be masked. Strict adherence to minimum 6 foot distancing between attendee families or individuals. Live choirs should not be allowed. Avoid if over 65 or in a high-risk group.*
4. *Prohibit COVID-19 "parties" or gatherings for the intentional spread of COVID-19.*
5. *Those who test positive for the virus must:*
 1. *Cooperate with healthcare personnel calling from the health department to identify their close contacts who might have been exposed to the virus.*
 2. *Self-quarantine for 14 days to avoid spreading the infection to others if they have been exposed to the virus unless public health directs otherwise.*
 3. *Wear face coverings and practice spatial distancing at home or move to a temporary shelter to avoid infecting their family members if they test positive for COVID-19 or have been exposed.*

In addition, for the long-term safety of Dallas County, we continue to recommend the ongoing:

1. *Enforcement of the Governor's masking and public gatherings orders for the general public.*
2. *Ongoing communication about the importance of physical distancing, masking and frequent hand hygiene.*
3. *Testing of high-risk individuals, populations, situations and others as deemed appropriate by public health guidance;*
4. *Concomitant contact tracing and isolation to interrupt transmission, and continued support and growth of the laboratory and public health infrastructure and reagent/kit supply chains to support the current and future needs.*

I made my peace early on to follow the science and our public health experts. I recommend that you do the same and enact these requirements statewide or regionally. If not, please rescind your prior order restricting local control and allow Dallas County to implement the above recommendations in an effort to slow the spread of the rampant and devastating COVID-19 virus.

Sincerely,



Clay Lewis Jenkins
Dallas County Judge