

**Ellis County Judge Todd Little Statement on COVID-19**  
**March 19, 2020**

Earlier today, Governor Abbott and state leaders updated Texans on COVID-19. Citizens across the state are working to overcome challenges to ensure public health and secure the safety of all first responders working to mitigate the effects of the COVID-19. We are expected to see testing capabilities increase in the coming days, with the ability to administer 15,000 to 20,000 tests a week. As our testing capabilities develop across the state we expect the number of confirmed cases to increase.

Last Friday, the State of Texas had 39 confirmed COVID-19 cases. As of today, there are more than 140 Texans identified to have been tested positive for COVID-19. That number continues to change by the hour. In Ellis County, we currently have one presumptive positive case of COVID-19 and several who are being self-quarantined in order to take precautionary measures of potential exposure. A presumptive positive result is when a patient has tested positive by a local public health laboratory, but those results are still pending confirmation at a Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) lab. We must all make sacrifices and commit to stopping the spread of COVID-19.

Communities across the state shall follow Federal, State, and CDC guidelines for preventative actions to stop the spread of COVID-19. These guidelines continue to evolve by the hour. You can find the most updated guidelines at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>. Today, Governor Abbott issued an Executive Order effective 11:59 p.m. on March 20, 2020, through 11:59 p.m. on April 3, 2020. This order is subject to an extension thereafter based on the status of COVID-19 in Texas and the recommendations by the CDC.

Every Texan shall avoid all gatherings in groups of more than 10 people. All critical infrastructure shall remain open and continue providing essential services. Businesses are to implement policies allowing employees to work from home to eliminate the spread of COVID-19.

In conjunction with the President, CDC, and Governor Abbott's Executive Orders, citizens shall not eat or drink at bars, restaurants, and food courts, or visit gyms or massage parlors. Restaurants and other establishments are allowed to utilize drive-through, delivery, and pick-up options. People shall not visit nursing homes, retirement, or long-term care facilities unless to provide critical assistance. Schools throughout the state shall temporarily close through April 3, 2020.

The Texas spirit has always cultivated freedom and resilience. With the help of every member of our community, we can move past the negative effects of COVID-19 that we have begun to see across the Nation. It is imperative that every citizen follow these guidelines to help contain the spread of this deadly virus.

Todd Little  
Ellis County Judge & Emergency Management Director

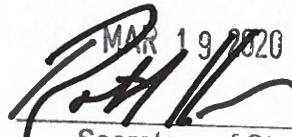


GOVERNOR GREG ABBOTT

March 19, 2020

FILED IN THE OFFICE OF THE  
SECRETARY OF STATE  
11:59 AM O'CLOCK

The Honorable Ruth R. Hughs  
Secretary of State  
State Capitol Room 1E.8  
Austin, Texas 78701

MAR 19 2020  
  
Secretary of State

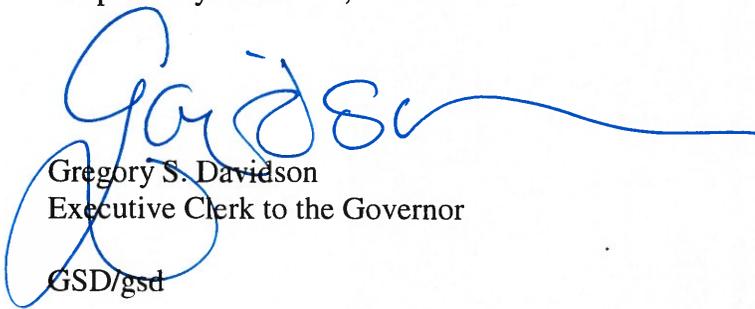
Dear Secretary Hughs:

Pursuant to his powers as Governor of the State of Texas, Greg Abbott has issued the following:

Executive Order No. GA-08 relating to COVID-19 preparedness and mitigation.

The original executive order is attached to this letter of transmittal.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Gregory S. Davidson  
Executive Clerk to the Governor

GSD/gsd

Attachment

# Executive Order

BY THE  
GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF TEXAS

Executive Department  
Austin, Texas  
March 19, 2020

EXECUTIVE ORDER  
GA 08

*Relating to COVID-19 preparedness and mitigation.*

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WHEREAS, the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) has been recognized globally as a contagious respiratory virus; and

WHEREAS, I, Greg Abbott, Governor of Texas, issued a disaster proclamation on March 13, 2020, certifying that COVID-19 poses an imminent threat of disaster for all counties in the state of Texas; and

WHEREAS, COVID-19 continues to spread and to pose an increasing, imminent threat of disaster throughout Texas; and

WHEREAS, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has advised that person-to-person contact heightens the risk of COVID-19 transmission; and

WHEREAS, the President's Coronavirus Guidelines for America, as promulgated by President Donald J. Trump and the CDC on March 16, 2020, call upon Americans to slow the spread of COVID-19 by avoiding social gatherings in groups of more than 10 people, using drive-thru, pickup, or delivery options at restaurants and bars, and avoiding visitation at nursing homes, among other steps; and

WHEREAS, the Texas Department of State Health Services has now determined that, as of March 19, 2020, COVID-19 represents a public health disaster within the meaning of Chapter 81 of the Texas Health and Safety Code; and

WHEREAS, under the Texas Disaster Act of 1975, "[t]he governor is responsible for meeting . . . the dangers to the state and people presented by disasters" (Section 418.001 of the Texas Government Code), and the legislature has given the governor broad authority to fulfill that responsibility.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Greg Abbott, Governor of Texas, by virtue of the power and authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the State of Texas, do hereby order the following on a statewide basis effective 11:59 p.m. on March 20, 2020, and continuing until 11:59 p.m. on April 3, 2020, subject to extension thereafter based on the status of COVID-19 in Texas and the recommendations of the CDC:

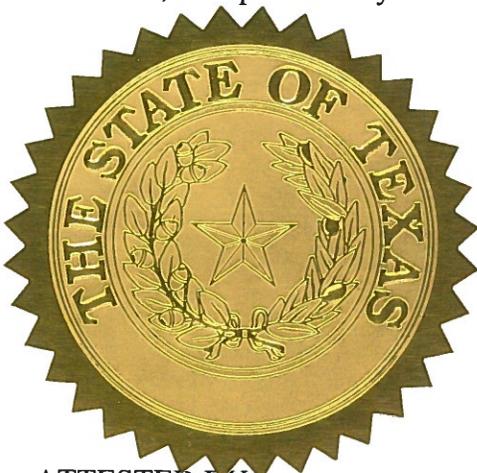
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MAR 19 2020

- Order No. 1 In accordance with the Guidelines from the President and the CDC, every person in Texas shall avoid social gatherings in groups of more than 10 people.
- Order No. 2 In accordance with the Guidelines from the President and the CDC, people shall avoid eating or drinking at bars, restaurants, and food courts, or visiting gyms or massage parlors; provided, however, that the use of drive-thru, pickup, or delivery options is allowed and highly encouraged throughout the limited duration of this executive order.
- Order No. 3 In accordance with the Guidelines from the President and the CDC, people shall not visit nursing homes or retirement or long-term care facilities unless to provide critical assistance.
- Order No. 4 In accordance with the Guidelines from the President and the CDC, schools shall temporarily close.

This executive order does not prohibit people from visiting a variety of places, including grocery stores, gas stations, parks, and banks, so long as the necessary precautions are maintained to reduce the transmission of COVID-19. This executive order does not mandate sheltering in place. All critical infrastructure will remain operational, domestic travel will remain unrestricted, and government entities and businesses will continue providing essential services. For offices and workplaces that remain open, employees should practice good hygiene and, where feasible, work from home in order to achieve optimum isolation from COVID-19. The more that people reduce their public contact, the sooner COVID-19 will be contained and the sooner this executive order will expire.

This executive order supersedes all previous orders on this matter that are in conflict or inconsistent with its terms, and this order shall remain in effect and in full force until March 31, 2020, subject to being extended, modified, amended, rescinded, or superseded by me or by a succeeding governor.



Given under my hand this the  
19th day of March, 2020.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Greg Abbott".

GREG ABBOTT  
Governor

ATTESTED BY:

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ruth R. Hughs".

RUTH R. HUGHS  
Secretary of State

FILED IN THE OFFICE OF THE  
SECRETARY OF STATE  
11:59am O'CLOCK

MAR 19 2020



**Commissioner John W. Hellerstedt, M.D.**

**DECLARATION OF A PUBLIC HEALTH DISASTER IN THE STATE OF TEXAS**

**March 19, 2020**

TO ALL TO WHOM THESE PRESENTS SHALL COME:

I, John W. Hellerstedt, M.D., Commissioner of the Department of State Health Services, do hereby certify that the introduction and spread of the communicable disease known as COVID-19 in the State of Texas has created an immediate threat, poses a high risk of death to a large number of people and creates a substantial risk of public exposure because of the disease's method of transmission and evidence that there is community spread in Texas.

THEREFORE, in accordance with the authority vested in me by Section 81.082(d) of the Texas Health and Safety Code, I do hereby declare a state of public health disaster for the entire State of Texas.

Pursuant to Section 81.002 of the code, each person shall act responsibly to prevent and control communicable disease. The following actions, taken immediately, will reduce and delay the spread of COVID-19:

- People, businesses and communities should immediately undertake hygiene, cleanliness and sanitation practices that are accessible, affordable and known to be effective against COVID-19.
  - Wash hands often for 20 seconds and encourage others to do the same.
  - If no soap and water are available, use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
  - Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue, then throw the tissue away.
  - Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
  - Disinfect surfaces, buttons, handles, knobs, and other places touched often.
  - Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- People who are known to have, or are under investigation or monitoring, for COVID-19, should adhere to the direction provided to them by duly authorized persons, including public health officials. Failure to abide by such direction may result in involuntary quarantine or isolation for the purposes of preventing further community spread of COVID-19.

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11:45am O'CLOCK

- People who are ill, especially those with symptoms consistent with influenza or COVID-19, should isolate themselves at home until they recover. Such persons should only present for medical evaluation and treatment if their symptoms are such that they cannot continue to be cared for in their home. And, when seeking medical care should call their doctor or health care facility before arriving to allow them to prepare.
- Limit trips into the public to essential outings. Traveling to work, the grocery store, the pharmacy or to seek medical care would be considered essential trips.
- Limit as much as possible close contact with other people. Stay six feet away.
- Do not gather in social groups of more than ten (10) individuals.
- Employers should allow work at home alternatives to the greatest extent possible.
- Restaurants should not allow dine-in options, either inside or outside. Take-out and curbside options with minimal contact are permitted and highly encouraged.

The Texas Department of State Health Services will continue to provide the most current and practical advice on how to control the spread of COVID-19 and encourages all Texans to seek additional information from a trusted source such as <https://www.dshs.texas.gov/coronavirus/> or from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/>.

Adherence to these rules and the sound public health principles that support them will provide optimal protection for the people of Texas. These measures are necessary to advance the health and safety of all Texans.

Copies of this proclamation will be filed with applicable authorities.

Given under my hand this the

19 day of March, 2020.



JOHN W. HELLERSTEDT, M.D.  
Commissioner of Public Health

ATTESTED BY:



Ruth Hughs  
Secretary of State

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