

To: The Local Leaders and Stakeholders of Burnet and Llano Counties

Regarding: Recommendations to mitigate community spread of coronavirus

The last week has seen an extraordinary uptick in the number of cases of coronavirus (COVID-19). More worrisome, the types of cases seen in the state of Texas, have changed. On Friday, March 13 the first documented case of community acquired COVID-19 was seen in Dallas. Though we have had previous cases in Texas, they have all been secondary to travel or contact with patients known to have the virus. Friday's case in Dallas was contracted in the course of routine daily activity. There was no known associated sick contact, and no associated travel to areas where the virus is known to be prevalent in the community.

This case prompted Dallas Mayor Eric Johnson to institute restrictions in the size of public gatherings in Dallas to gatherings less than 500 individuals. This is a prudent precaution and follows the CDC's guidelines for community mitigation in the event of community spread. These specific guidelines can be found at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/community-mitigation-strategy.pdf>.

Because of this change in the pattern of spread of COVID-19 in Texas, we would recommend the following be instituted in Burnet and Llano counties. These measures follow the guidance in the above referenced link:

- I. Cancel large gatherings of greater than 50 people. (Note: Mayor Johnson in Dallas chose 500 as their threshold on Friday, March 13th). The above document states this threshold is at the discretion of the community. We are choosing 50 as it was recommended by the CDC on 3/15/2020
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/large-events/mass-gatherings-ready-for-covid-19.html>)
- II. Reduce activities (for example, group congregations and religious services), especially for organizations with individuals at increased risk of severe illness. (We have to consider that we are two of the oldest counties, by average age, in Texas. This makes most of our organizations consist of "individuals at increased risk of severe illness")
- III. Consider offering video/audio of events (Some churches are offering livestreaming of their services).
- IV. Determine ways to continue providing support services to individuals at increased risk of severe disease while limiting group settings and exposures. (ex: Meals on Wheels, and other home services)
- V. For organizations that serve high risk populations, cancel gatherings of more than 10 people. (This is word for word from the CDC document.)

The above link also includes mitigation strategies for individuals and households, healthcare providers, assisted living and senior facilities, as well as schools and daycares. We would encourage you to disseminate this throughout your communities. Further, we would encourage you to review the strategies for the changes that would occur if/when we have substantial community transmission of COVID-19.

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