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**NEWS
RELEASE**

05 / 01 / 2020

COVID-19 Update

City Reports One COVID-19 Death, Urges Residents to Abide Local Directive

EL PASO, Texas—The City of El Paso Public Health Department is reporting **one (1)** additional COVID-19 death, bringing the total number of deaths to **22**. The male patient was in his 60s with underlying health conditions.

El Paso is also reporting **37** new COVID-19 cases bringing the county’s total number to **961**. To-date **419** people have recovered from COVID-19; consequently, there are **520** active cases within the county. Positive cases in El Paso County include 505 females and 458 males; see accompanying graphics and map. There are now 58 patients who are hospitalized, and 30 of those hospitalized are currently in ICU.

“We are saddened to report another death due to the virus, and we send our deepest condolences to his family,” said Dr. Hector Ocaranza, City/County Health Authority. “As I have said over and over again, stay home! Please don’t go out if you don’t have to, don’t visit friends or families who don’t live under your same roof.”

Ocaranza said there is a strong correlation between the Easter break and the spike in positive cases, and he warns that the community will very likely see another spike in cases—or worse, a rise in deaths—due to social gathers expected to occur during the Mother’s Day weekend.

“If you absolutely must go out, wear a face covering because anyone, even those without symptoms, can spread the virus. If you must go to the store or to the mall do so quickly and then go home,” Ocaranza added. “If you insist on going to a restaurant, only do so with family who live in the same household. Wear a mask when entering the restraint and remove it when you are eating or drinking. It is about using common sense to protect your loved ones. Don’t put yourself or your family at risk.”

The Local Emergency Directive has been amended due to the ongoing upward trend in cases. El Pasoans must adhere to wearing a face covering when out conducting essential business or tasks.

The updated directive is available at www.epstrong.org under “Health Orders.”

The directive does not alter Gov. Greg Abbott’s orders as Texas cities are not prohibited from mandating the use of face coverings, but local governments are not allowed to fine or jail people for failing to do so.

The City and County of El Paso also prohibited public and private social gatherings of any number of people occurring outside or inside a single household or dwelling unit is prohibited. **Plainly, this means visiting your parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins or friends who do not live in same household as you is prohibited as a preventative measure to stop COVID-19 from spreading.**

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A face covering is not required on anyone who has trouble breathing, is unconscious, incapacitated, or exercising outdoors and not within 6 feet of any other individual not from the same household.

Wearing a face covering is not a substitute for maintaining 6-foot social distancing and hand-washing, as these remain important steps to slowing the spread of the virus.

It is also recommended that the face coverings be cleaned daily. Individuals should be careful not to touch their eyes, nose and mouth when removing their face covering and wash their hands immediately after removing the covering.

Testing in Rural Communities

The Office of Emergency Management has been working with the Texas Department of Emergency Management to provide additional testing sites for the County's rural communities. The dates and locations are as follow, please note a correction by the State for the Fabens and Horizon locations:

May 12

- Fabens: El Paso County ESD2 District Office, 16001 Socorro Rd., Fabens TX
- Montana Vista: Montana Vista Fire Station 2, 5411 Paso View Dr., El Paso, TX

May 13

- San Elizario: San Elizario Fire Station-1415 San Antonio Rd., San Elizario, TX
- Horizon: Horizon First Baptist Church; 17018 Darrington, Horizon, TX
- Vinton: West Valley Fire Department: 510 Vinton Rd, Anthony, TX

Citizens are asked to make an appointment 24 hours prior to the testing date either online at TXCOVIDTEST.ORG or by calling 512-883-2400. Testing is open to all regardless of location of residence. The goal is to test 60 individuals per site; however, additional testing may be available depending on demand and availability.

The time of the testing will be from 9am to 5pm. If residents do not call or register for an appointment, they can still show up at the site and will be instructed to either register on their phone or call the number to schedule accordingly.

Residents are encouraged to report non-compliance by calling the police department non-emergency at (915) 832-4400 or 3-1-1. The 21-COVID hotline is operational from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. Monday through Friday and 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Saturday and Sunday. For referral to services, contact 2-1-1 and select option six (6). For more information, visit www.epstrong.org.

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