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**NEWS
RELEASE**

06 / 28 / 2020

COVID-19 UPDATE

City Reports Another Triple-Digit Spike

EL PASO, Texas—Today the City of El Paso Department of Public Health (DPH) reported 284 new COVID-19 cases, the largest spike since the introduction of the virus to the community.

Health officials advised the increase appears to be due in part to clusters in an elderly care facility and a detention facility. However, officials report the majority of today's increase is likely owing to community spread. DPH officials are working to provide the public more details about these clusters and spikes in the coming days.

"This jump in positive cases is incredibly concerning, and calls for a renewed focus by each person to be stricter towards taking care of themselves and their loved ones," said City-County Local Health Authority Dr. Hector Ocaranza. "While we are still investigating the details behind the cause of the spikes recorded over the last week; we've seen a trend in cases among those in their teens, 20s and 30s and likely a haphazard approach to health prevention. Collectively, more than 40 percent of our positive cases are individuals in their 20s and 30s. However, the larger concern is that these individuals may be in contact with at-risk family members who are vulnerable and may become the next COVID-19 fatality."

The City's epidemiology team is conducting ongoing investigations in an effort to determine possible spread of infection and implement measures to reduce the spread of COVID-19; and health officials remind the public that they need the community's cooperation to lower the infection rate.

While City and County officials are working to amend the local Directive—of which several have already gone into effect—health officials said these stricter orders along with social awareness among all residents to follow recommended preventive behaviors are expected to help the overall health of our community.

The public is reminded that there is currently no vaccine to prevent COVID-19. Additionally, it is estimated that more than 20 percent of the total positive cases are asymptomatic, meaning the patients reported showing no COVID-19 symptoms.

At this time, the best way to prevent illness is to avoid exposure to this virus. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) the virus mainly spreads via person-to-person contact:

- Between people who are in close contact with one another (within 6 feet);
- Through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs, sneezes or talks;
- These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby and possibly be inhaled into the lungs.

For more information, visit www.epstrong.org.

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