



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 17, 2020

Dallas County Reports 1,382 New Positive 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Cases and 10 Deaths Including 406 Probable Cases

DALLAS -- As of 12:00 pm December 17, 2020, Dallas County Health and Human Services is reporting 1,382 additional positive cases of 2019 novel coronavirus (COVID-19) in Dallas County, 976 confirmed cases and 406 probable cases. There is a cumulative total of 150,509 cases (PCR test). There is a cumulative total of 17,103 probable cases (antigen test). A total of 1,413 Dallas County residents have lost their lives due to COVID-19 illness.

The additional deaths being reported today include the following:

- A woman in her 60's who was a resident of the City of Dallas. She had been critically ill in an area hospital, and had underlying high risk health conditions.
- A woman in her 60's who was a resident of a long-term care facility in the City of Dallas. She died in hospice and had underlying high risk health conditions.
- A woman in her 70's who was a resident of the Desoto. She was critically ill in an area hospital, and had underlying high risk health conditions.
- A man in his 70's who was a resident of the City of Dallas. He had been critically ill in an area hospital, and had underlying high risk health conditions.
- A man in his 70's who was a resident of a long-term care facility in the City of Mesquite. He had been critically ill in an area hospital, and had underlying high risk health conditions.
- A woman in her 70's who was a resident of the City of Balch Springs. She had been hospitalized, and had underlying high risk health conditions.
- A man in his 80's who was a resident of the City of Dallas. He had been critically ill in an area hospital, and had underlying high risk health conditions.
- A man in his 80's who was a resident of a long-term care facility in the City of Dallas. He had been critically ill in an area hospital, and had underlying high risk health conditions.
- A man in his 80's who was a resident of the City of Dallas. He had been critically ill in an area hospital, and had underlying high risk health conditions.
- A man in his 90's who was a resident of a long-term care facility in the City of Dallas. He had been critically ill in an area hospital, and had underlying high risk health conditions.

The provisional seven-day average of daily new confirmed and probable cases (by date of test collection) for CDC week 49 was to **1,647**, which is a rate of **62.5** daily new cases per 100,000 residents—the highest case rate in Dallas County since the beginning of the pandemic. The percentage of respiratory specimens testing positive for SARS-CoV-2 remains high, with **21.6%** of symptomatic patients presenting to area hospitals testing positive in week 49 (week ending 12/5/20).

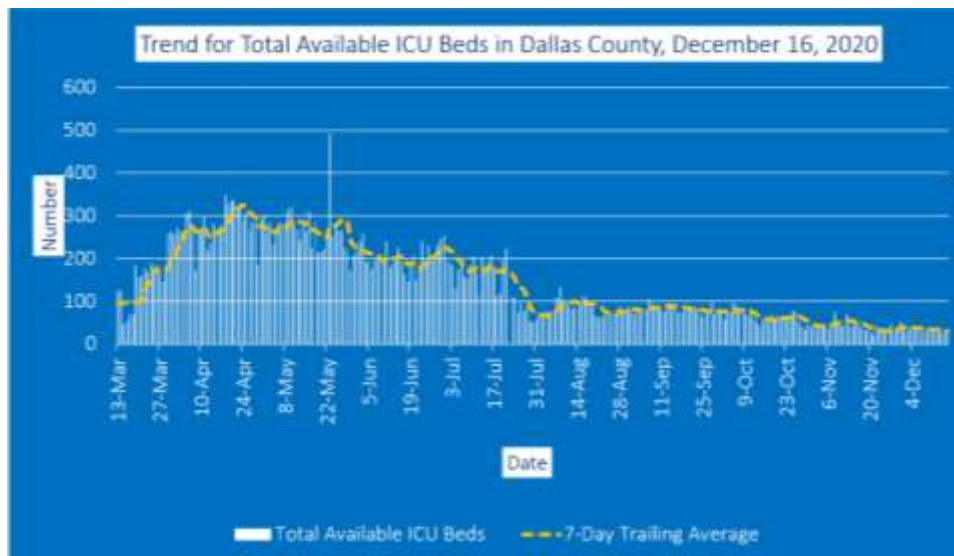
Over the past 30 days, there have been 4,520 COVID-19 cases in school-aged children and staff reported from 735 separate K-12 schools in Dallas County, including 681 staff members. Of these cases, 534 have been associated with extracurricular activities, including athletics.

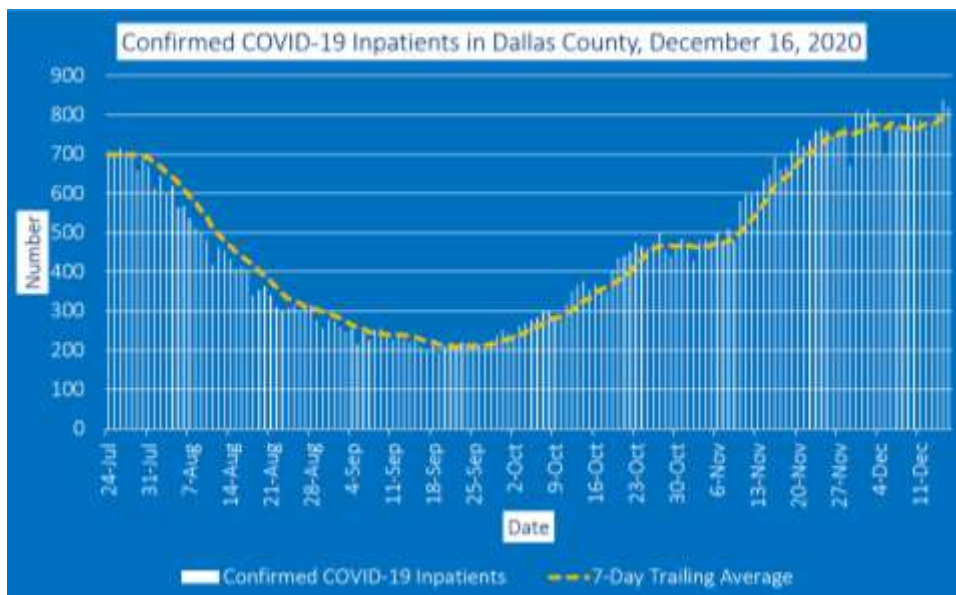
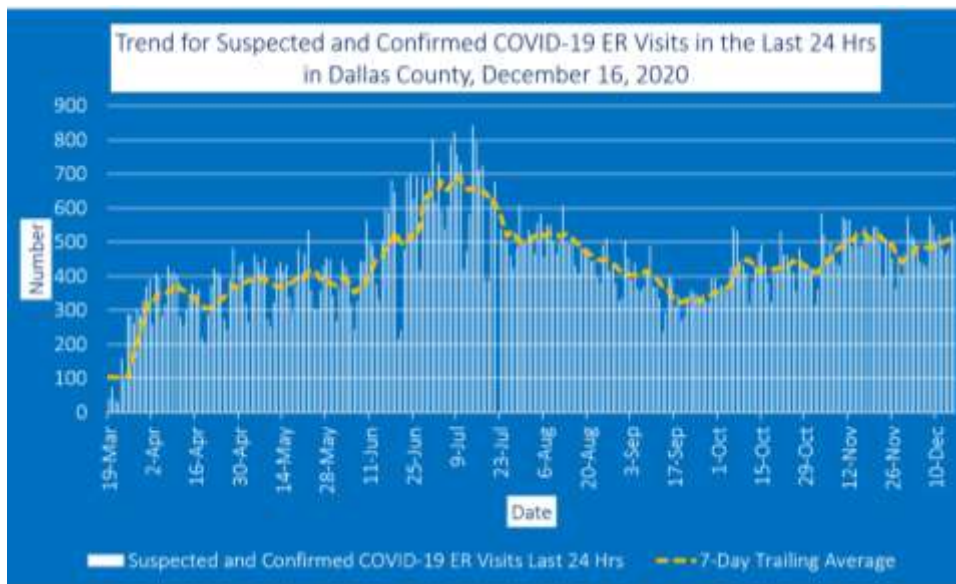
There are currently 93 active long-term care facility outbreaks. Over the past 30 days, a total of 848 COVID-19 cases have been reported from these facilities, including 317 staff members. Of these cases 32 have been hospitalized, and 33 have died, including 2 deaths of staff members. Twenty-six outbreaks of COVID-19 in congregate-living facilities (e.g. homeless shelters, group homes, and halfway homes) have been reported in the past 30 days associated with 165 cases, including 6 hospitalizations. One facility has reported 89 COVID-19 outbreak cases since October.

Of all confirmed cases requiring hospitalization to date, more than two-thirds have been under 65 years of age. Diabetes has been an underlying high-risk health condition reported in about a third of all hospitalized patients with COVID-19. Of the total confirmed deaths reported to date, about 22% have been associated with long-term care facilities. New cases are being reported as a daily aggregate, with a more detailed summary report updated Tuesdays and Fridays available at: <https://www.dallascounty.org/departments/dchhs/2019-novel-coronavirus/daily-updates.php>

Local health experts use hospitalizations, ICU admissions, and ER visits as three of the key indicators as part of determining the COVID-19 Risk Level (color-coded risk) and corresponding guidelines for activities during our COVID-19 response. There were 821 COVID-19 patients in acute care in Dallas County for the period ending on Wednesday, December 16. The number of emergency room visits for COVID-19 like symptoms in Dallas County was 524 for the same time-period, which represents around 22 percent of all emergency department visits in the county according to information reported to the North Central Texas Trauma Regional Advisory Council. These numbers continued to exhaust our local hospital systems, along with regional high hospitalizations, and our health care workers are being stretched thin. Please help us change course and commit to a virtual holiday. You can find additional information on risk-level monitoring data [here](#).

On December 3, Trauma Service Area E (TSA E), which includes Dallas County and the greater Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex, reached seven consecutive days where the percentage of COVID-19 confirmed patients in regional hospitals, as a percentage of available hospital beds, exceeded 15 percent. According to Governor Abbott's Executive Order GA-32 (GA-32), this makes TSA E an area with high hospitalizations and certain occupancy reductions are automatically triggered by reaching this threshold.





“Today we report an additional 1,382 cases and ten new deaths. As the holidays approach, now is the time to remember the adage ‘an ounce of prevention beats a pound of cure.’ Thinking ahead on your holiday needs, whether it’s groceries or gifts, and ordering those online now so they’ll arrive on time, or ordering them for curbside pick-up, will lead to less crowds and less spread.

There is a light at the end of the tunnel with vaccinations happening and thousands of our healthcare heroes have received their vaccination. By the end of this month, we expect hundreds of thousands of North Texas' healthcare heroes and nursing home residents to have received their first shot but that great news should not be taken as an excuse to disregard doctors' advice to wear a mask, avoid crowds, and forgo get-togethers. Now is a time that we all must make small sacrifices to keep our community and our country strong at this time of unprecedented high spread and while we await the herd immunity that will come from the vast majority of the population being inoculated.

I am so thankful for the people of North Texas. You have showed courage in rising to the challenge time and time again this year. You did it at Thanksgiving and you're doing it now once again. Remember, please don't focus on what your neighbor is doing that you believe is unsafe, rather focus on what incremental actions that you and those in your sphere of influence can take to keep yourself, and our community and country just a little bit safer," said Dallas County Judge Clay Jenkins.

All Dallas County COVID-19 Updates and Information can be found here:

<https://www.dallascounty.org/covid-19/> and all guidance documents can be found here:

<https://www.dallascounty.org/covid-19/guidance-health.php>

Specific Guidance for the Public:

- [Dallas County COVID-19 Related Health Guidance for the Public](#)
- [Dallas County Measures for Protecting An Institution's Workforce from COVID-19 Infection: Employer/Employee Guidance](#)
- [Dallas County Guidance for Individuals at High-Risk for Severe COVID-19](#)

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends taking everyday preventive actions to help prevent the spread of respiratory diseases, including:

- Avoid close contact outside your home: Put 6 feet of distance between yourself and people who don't live in your household.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a cloth face cover when around others and continue to keep about 6 feet between yourself and others. The cloth face cover is not a substitute for social distancing.
- Stay home when you are sick, except to seek medical care
- Wash your hands often and with soap and water for at least 20 seconds and help young children to do the same. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-base hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces daily using a regular household cleaning spray or wipes.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash. If you do not have a tissue, use your sleeve, not your hands. Immediately wash your hands.
- Monitor your health daily. Be alert for symptoms. Take your temperature and follow CDC guidance if symptoms develop.

Additional information is available at the following websites:

- CDC: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>
- CDC Travel Information: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html>
- DSHS: <https://dshs.texas.gov/coronavirus/>
- DCHHS: <https://www.dallascounty.org/departments/dchhs/2019-novel-coronavirus.php>

CONTACT:

Clay Lewis Jenkins, Dallas County Judge

Clay.Jenkins@dallascounty.org

[214-653-7949](tel:214-653-7949)

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