



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 18, 2020

**Dallas County Reports Record Hospitalizations for Second Time this Week,
2,248 New Positive 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Cases and 10 Deaths
Including 310 Probable Cases**

DALLAS -- As of 12:00 pm December 18, 2020, Dallas County Health and Human Services is reporting 2,248 additional positive cases of 2019 novel coronavirus (COVID-19) in Dallas County, 1,938 confirmed cases and 310 probable cases. There is a cumulative total of 152,447 cases (PCR test). There is a cumulative total of 17,413 probable cases (antigen test). A total of 1,423 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 40's who was a resident of the City of Irving. She had been critically ill in an area hospital, and did not have underlying high risk health conditions.
- A man in his 50's who was a resident of the City of Dallas. He died in a facility, and had underlying high risk health conditions.
- A woman in her 60's who was a resident of the City of Grand Prairie. She had been hospitalized, and had underlying high risk health conditions.
- A man in his 60's who was a resident of the City of Garland. He 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 the City of Mesquite. She 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 Grand Prairie. She 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 Mesquite. She 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 woman in her 80's who was a resident of the City of Richardson. She 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 the City of Duncanville. He had been hospitalized, 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.

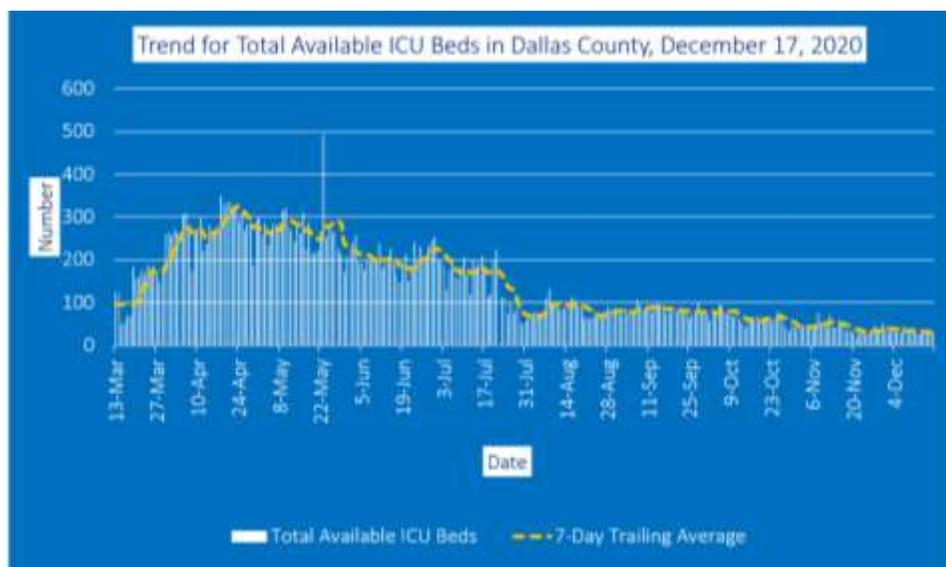
There are currently 93 active long-term care facility outbreaks. Over the past 30 days, a total of 848 COVID-19 cases have been reported from these facilities, including 317 staff members. Of these cases 32 have been hospitalized, and 33 have died, including 2 deaths of staff members. Twenty-six outbreaks 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.

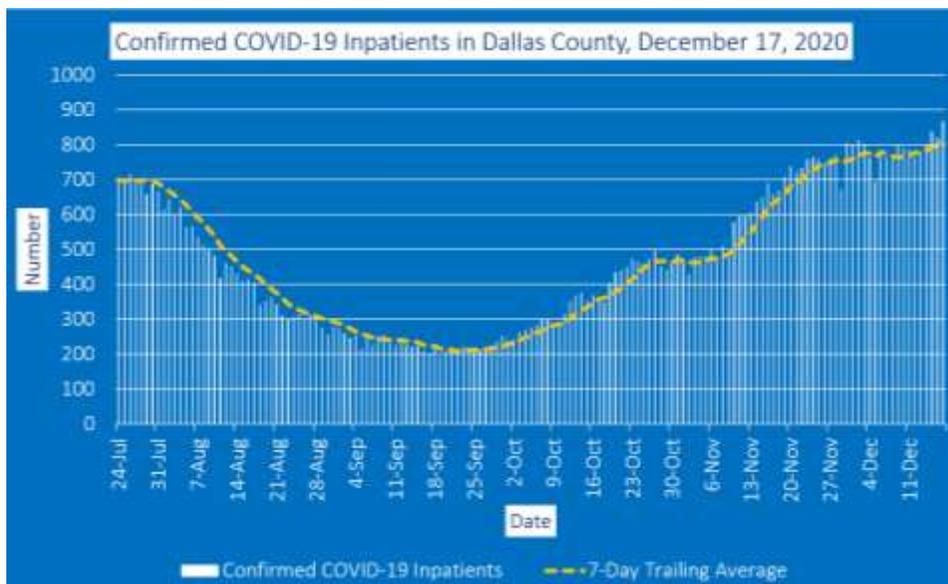
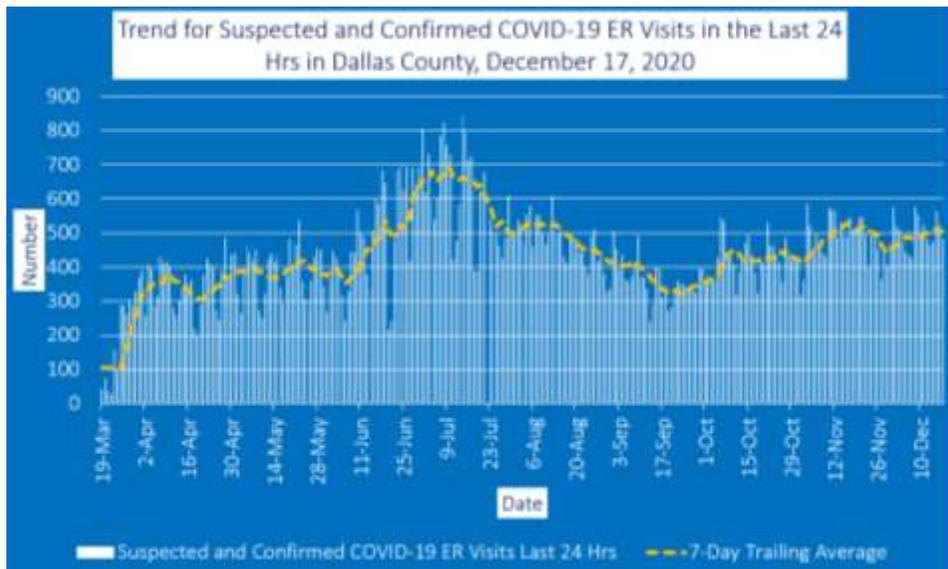
Of all confirmed cases requiring hospitalization to date, more than two-thirds have been under 65 years of age. Diabetes has been an underlying high-risk health condition reported in about a third of all hospitalized patients with COVID-19. Of the total confirmed deaths reported to date, about 22% have 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. Friday's update will be available this evening 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 867 COVID-19 patients in acute care in Dallas County for the period ending on Thursday, December 17. The number of emergency room visits for COVID-19 like symptoms in Dallas County was 482 for the same time-period, which represents around 20 percent of all emergency department visits in the county according to information reported to the North Central Texas Trauma Regional Advisory Council. Twice this week we've now seen record highs for hospitalizations, nearly 30 more than our previous high of 838 two days ago. Additionally, we are seeing record highs across the region. Unlike in the spring and summer surges, the ability to draw on regional capacity and additional staff is limited at this time. Please help us change course and commit to virtual holiday activities. A post-holiday surge on top of the current increases could be devastating to our already heavily burdened health care providers. 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 marks our second highest total of new COVID positive cases and 10 more deaths to report here in Dallas County. The increasing number of hospitalizations and COVID rate of infection here in North Texas is very concerning and precipitated our press conference today. It is imperative that we all make smart choices and avoid crowds and get-togethers this holiday season as we are getting to a place where our healthcare system can be compromised by another surge brought about by increased activities at the holidays. We can’t let that

happen. Now is the time for patriotism and to look inward, not at our neighbors to see what they're doing that we believe is wrong, but at ourselves for what incremental changes in planning ahead we can do to have a meaningful and safe holidays while avoiding increased risk of spread," 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>

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