



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 19, 2020

**Dallas County Reports Record High Hospitalizations for Third Time this Week,
1,723 New Positive 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Cases and 8 Deaths
Including 347 Probable Cases**

DALLAS -- As of 12:00 pm December 19, 2020, Dallas County Health and Human Services is reporting 1,723 positive cases of 2019 novel coronavirus (COVID-19) in Dallas County, 1,376 confirmed cases and 347 probable cases. There is a cumulative total of 153,823 confirmed cases (PCR test). There is a cumulative total of 17,760 probable cases (antigen test). A total of 1,431 Dallas County residents have lost their lives due to COVID-19 illness.

The additional deaths being reported today include the following:

- A man in his 50's who was a resident of the City of Dallas. He was found deceased at home, and had underlying high risk health conditions.
- A man in his 50's who was a resident of the City of Garland. He was found deceased at home, and had underlying high risk health conditions.
- A man in his 70's who was a resident of the City of Dallas. He expired in an area hospital ED, and had underlying high risk health conditions.
- A man in his 70's who was a resident of the City of Grand Prairie. 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 the City of Irving. He expired in hospice care, 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 expired in hospice care.
- A woman in her 80's who was a resident of the City of Dallas. She expired in hospice care, and had underlying high risk health conditions.
- A man in his 90's who was a resident of the City of Cedar Hill. 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 50 was to **1,668**, which is a rate of **62.9** daily new cases per 100,000 residents. The percentage of respiratory specimens testing positive for SARS-CoV-2 remains high, with **19.7%** of symptomatic patients presenting to area hospitals testing positive in week 50 (week ending 12/12/20).

Over the past 30 days, there have been 6,050 COVID-19 cases in school-aged children and staff reported from 780 separate K-12 schools in Dallas County, including 686 staff members. Of these cases, 603 have been associated with extracurricular activities, including athletics.

There are currently 99 active long-term care facility outbreaks. Since the beginning of the pandemic, a total of 2,696 residents and 1,550 healthcare workers in long-term facilities in Dallas have been diagnosed with COVID-19. Of these, 631 have been hospitalized and 318 have died. About 22% of all deaths reported to date have been associated with long-term care facilities. Thirty-nine 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 163 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. 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>

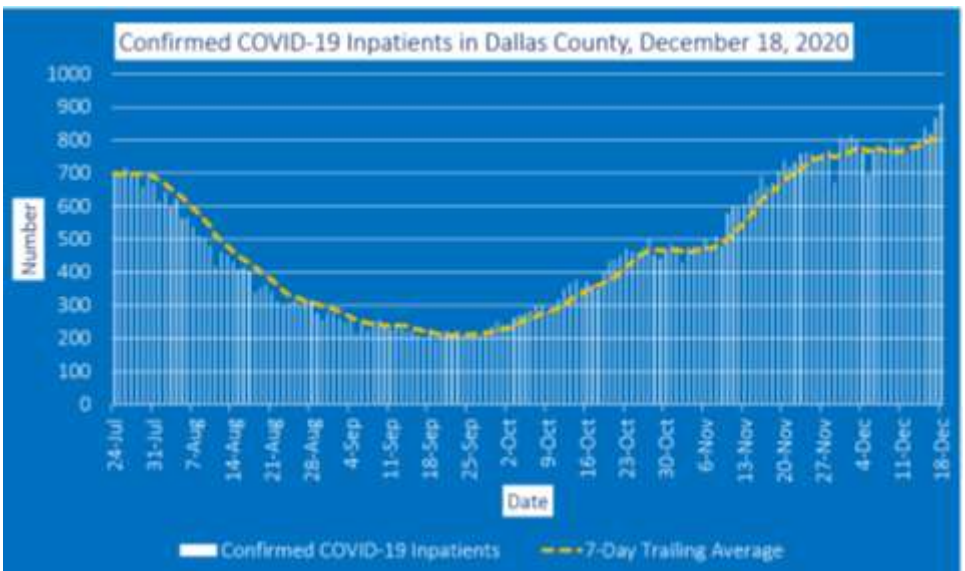
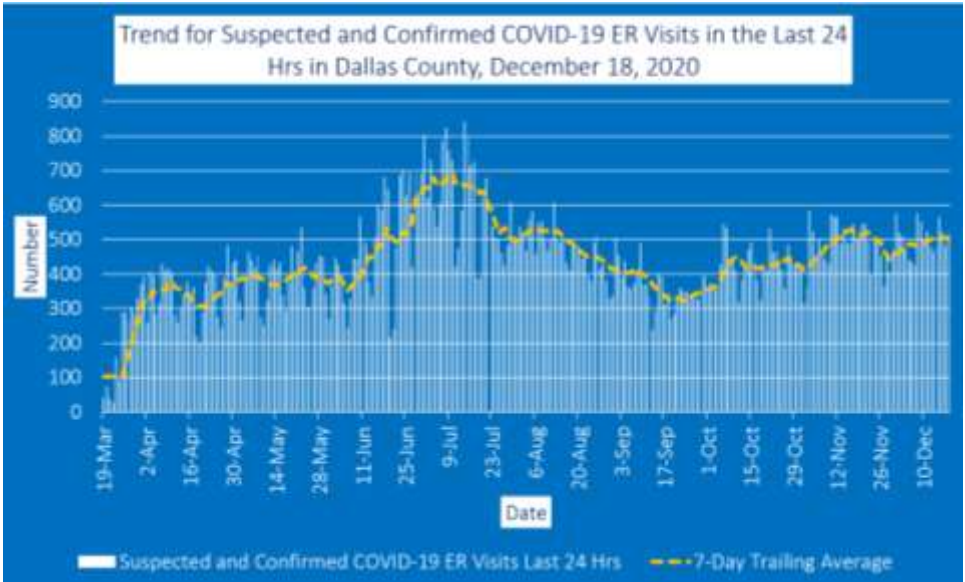
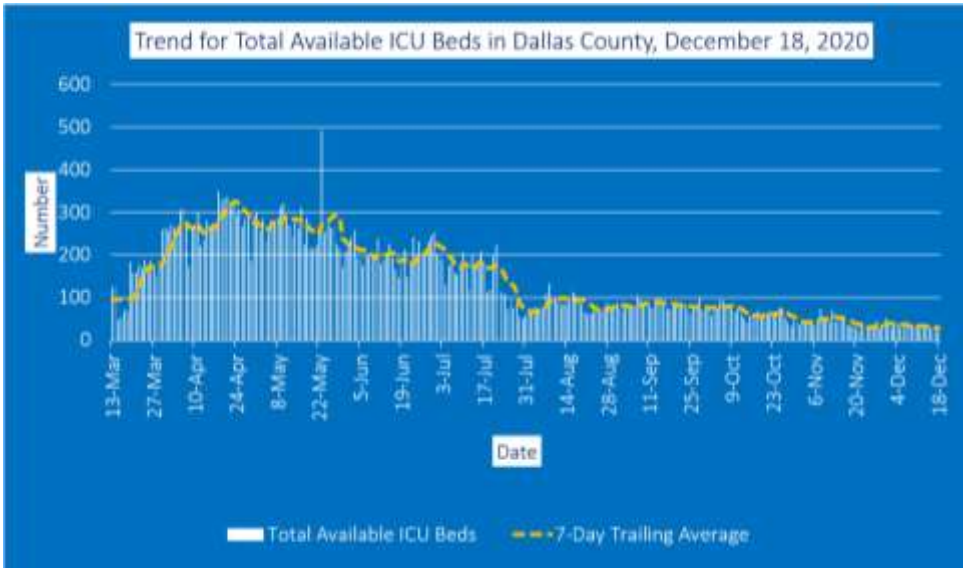
Local health experts use hospitalizations, ICU admissions, and ER visits as three of the key indicators as part of determining the COVID-19 Risk Level (color-coded risk) and corresponding guidelines for activities during our COVID-19 response. There were 910 COVID-19 patients in acute care in Dallas County for the period ending on Friday, December 18, a new record high. The number of emergency room visits for COVID-19 like symptoms in Dallas County was 517 for the same time-period, which represents around 23 percent of all emergency department visits in the county according to information reported to the North Central Texas Trauma Regional Advisory Council. Projections have been updated by UTSW, unfortunately showing a high of 1,060 by December 29. Hospitals are the last defense, not the first. Individual behavior changes and protective actions are critical to change the course. 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.

Additionally, the chart below is the December 18, 2020 Dallas County Health and Human Services 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) summary of confirmed and probable cases and deaths since late June in Dallas County.

Summary of weekly COVID-19 confirmed and probable cases, deaths, and percentage positive laboratory tests, Dallas County (CDC Weeks 25 - 50)

CDC Week	Week Ending	Total Confirmed and Probable Cases	Total School-Aged Cases (5 to 17 years)	Daily Average New Confirmed and Probable Cases [†]	Daily Average New Confirmed and Probable Deaths ^{**}	Percentage of Tests Positive for SARS-CoV-2 ^{***}
25	6/20/2020	5,853	472	836	5	26.9%
26	6/27/2020	8,618	647	1,230	8	30.5%
27	7/4/2020	8,942	699	1,277	9	30.0%
28	7/11/2020	9,191	865	1,313	9	26.6%
29	7/18/2020	6,601	688	943	11	21.7%
30	7/25/2020	4,521	493	646	15	19.3%
31	8/1/2020	3,350	418	479	12	15.9%
32	8/8/2020	2,844	320	406	9	14.0%
33	8/15/2020	2,159	183	308	9	13.2%
34	8/22/2020	1,757	187	251	6	11.2%
35	8/29/2020	2,195	188	313	6	10.8%
36	9/5/2020	2,066	162	295	3	10.5%
37	9/12/2020	1,871	198	267	3	9.7%
38	9/19/2020	2,241	239	320	2	11.4%
39	9/26/2020	2,497	261	357	2	10.7%
40	10/3/2020	2,656	306	379	2	10.0%
41	10/10/2020	3,579	453	511	2	11.5%
42	10/17/2020	4,478	557	640	2	14.3%
43	10/24/2020	5,305	691	758	4	15.1%
44	10/31/2020	5,438	617	777	5	15.0%
45	11/7/2020	7,732	944	1,105	5	15.3%
46	11/14/2020	10,100	1,307	1,443	8	19.8%
47	11/21/2020	10,048	1,220	1,435	6	20.4%
48	11/28/2020	8,464	894	1,209	7	21.7%
49	12/05/2020	11,915	1,644	1,702	4	21.6%
50	12/12/2020	11,678	1,607	1,668	3	19.7%





“Our number of average cases per day is slightly down this week and our number of reported deaths this week is down to 56. For the third time this week, we’re also reporting a new record of COVID-19 hospitalizations in Dallas County. Unlike in the spring and summer surges, the ability to draw on regional capacity and additional staff is limited at this time. A post-holiday surge on top of the current increases could be devastating to our already heavily burdened health care providers. This is not the position we wanted to be in heading into the winter holidays. While we are all tired of COVID-19, the virus unfortunately isn’t tired of us. We are still at an extremely high rate of spread in our community and it is, more important than ever that we listen to the doctors and make the small modifications in our behavior that will make a big difference in protecting you, your family, your community, and ultimately your country until a vaccine can be broadly administered.

A key component to that decision-making is to think ahead. For the physical well-being of yourself and others, think ahead on shopping trips and other trips outside the home. Are there trips that normally you do in person that you can take advantage of curbside or delivery? I encourage everyone to shop locally as our business owners need your help. They are more than happy to take your order on the phone or online for curbside pickup. We will need to think ahead so you and your loved ones do not find yourselves sitting around with nothing to do. News media, newspapers and the internet are full of ideas for safe and new holiday traditions that can replace the old ones that we need to forgo for this year. Testing technology ahead of time if you plan to Facetime, Zoom, or use some other service to share a virtual joint meal or other holiday festivities with people not in your home, can lessen the potential stress of the technology not working at the time you need it.

It will be a different holiday this year, after all, it’s been a different year but the holidays need not be less meaningful. When we think about what the holidays are all about, those things that are most important to you are still there: those who you love and the courage, spirit, and hope that the people of North Texas share. For a full list of the doctors’ recommendations for staying safe at this time of high spread, please go to www.DallasCountyCOVID.org,” 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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