



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 29, 2020

**Dallas County Reports Record High Hospitalizations
1,129 New Positive 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Cases
and 16 Deaths, including 247 Probable Cases**

COVID hospitalizations account for 23% of all patients in Dallas County, 30% in the region

DALLAS -- As of 12:00 pm December 29, 2020, Dallas County Health and Human Services is reporting 1,129 additional positive cases of 2019 novel coronavirus (COVID-19) in Dallas County, 882 confirmed cases and 247 probable cases. There is a cumulative total of 168,782 confirmed cases (PCR test). There is a cumulative total of 20,470 probable cases (antigen test). A total of 1,596 Dallas County residents have lost their lives due to COVID-19 illness.

The additional deaths being reported today include the following:

- An 18 year old male who was a resident of Garland. He had been critically ill in an area hospital, and had underlying chronic medical conditions.
- A man in his 30'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 40'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 40's who was a resident of the city of Dallas. He had been hospitalized, and had underlying high risk health conditions.
- A woman in her 50's who was a resident of Mesquite. She had been critically ill in an area hospital, and had underlying high risk conditions.
- A woman in her 50's who was a resident of the city of Dallas, she expired at home, and had underlying high risk health conditions.
- A man in his 60'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 60's who was a resident of Garland. She had been critically ill in an area hospital, and did not have underlying high risk health conditions.
- A man in his 60's who was a resident of Carrollton. 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 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 the city of Richardson. 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 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 the city of Hutchins. 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 Dallas. She had been hospitalized, and had high risk underlying 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 Dallas, she had been hospitalized, and did not have 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 **1,722**, which is a rate of **65.3** daily new cases per 100,000 residents. The percentage of respiratory specimens testing positive for SARS-CoV-2 remains high, with **23.3%** of symptomatic patients presenting to area hospitals testing positive in week 50 (week ending 12/12/20). Since the beginning of the pandemic, over 3,864 healthcare workers and first responders have been diagnosed with COVID-19 in Dallas County.

Over the past 30 days, there have been 5,971 COVID-19 cases in school-aged children and staff reported from 756 separate K-12 schools in Dallas County, including 569 staff members. Since the beginning of the pandemic, 21 school nurses have been diagnosed with COVID-19.

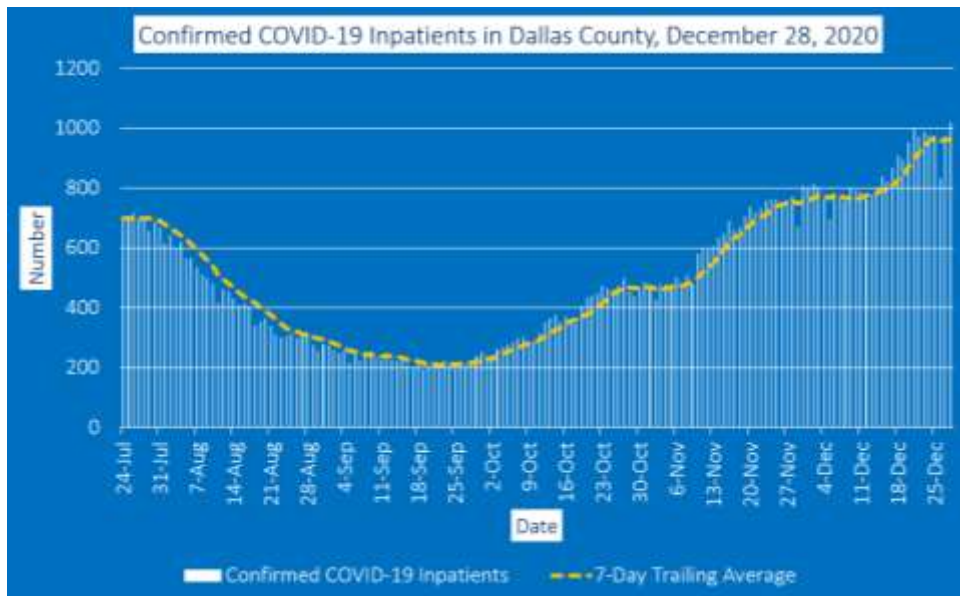
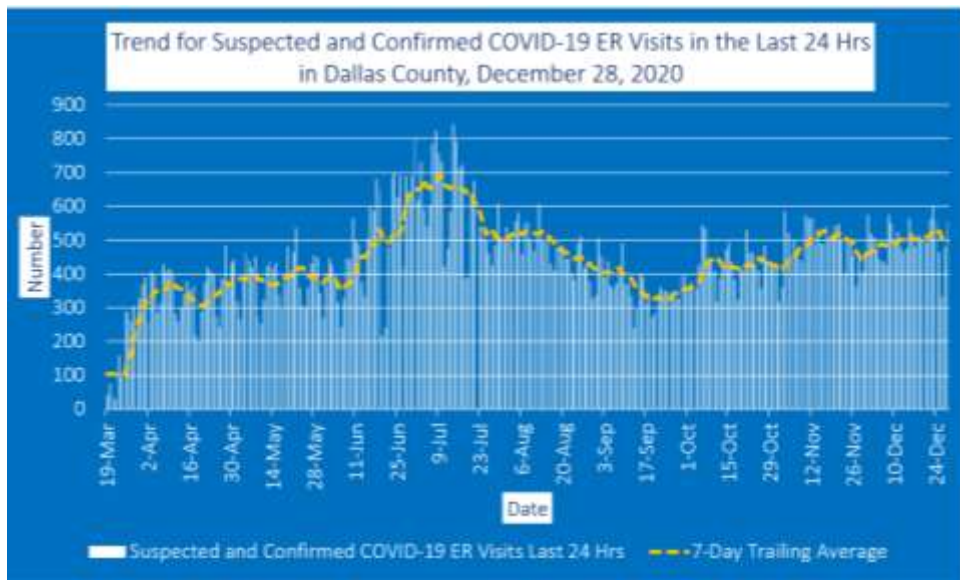
There are currently 102 active long-term care facility outbreaks. This is the highest number of long-term care facilities with active outbreaks reported in Dallas County since the beginning of the pandemic. This year, a total of 2,954 residents and 1,687 healthcare workers in long-term facilities in Dallas have been diagnosed with COVID-19. Of these, 665 have been hospitalized and 352 have died. About 22% of all deaths reported to date have been associated with long-term care facilities. Forty-two 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 115 cases. One facility has reported 93 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 more detailed summary reports updated Tuesday and Friday evenings are 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 1,018 COVID-19 patients in acute care in Dallas County for the period ending on Monday, December 28. The number of emergency room visits for COVID-19 like symptoms in Dallas County was 557 for the same time-period, which represents around 25 percent of all emergency department visits in the county according to information reported to the North Central Texas Trauma Regional Advisory Council.

Unfortunately, this new record high does not come as a surprise based on modeling. While these high numbers are predictable, they are also preventable. Individual behavior change and precautionary actions can lessen the surge. Hospitals are our last line of defense and they are running out of staffed beds to care for our sickest patients. Please take personal responsibility to stop the spread of COVID-19 by following public health guidance. Avoid meeting outside your household, avoid indoor settings such as restaurants, bars, and malls, and stay home to the fullest extent possible. #StayHomeStaySafe was critical to our success in the spring and summer, and with higher numbers today, we must commit to that strategy again. 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 add an additional 1,129 cases and 16 deaths, ranging in ages from a teenager to individuals in their 80’s. Our hospital numbers are at all-time highs and our availability of ICU beds in the region is at an all-time low. Currently, one in four persons hospitalized in Dallas County has COVID and approximately 30 percent of those hospitalized in the region have COVID. With the UT Southwestern projections indicating that our numbers of COVID hospitalizations will rise dramatically by January 5, it is imperative that all of us make the small, smart sacrifices to keep ourselves and our community as healthy as possible in this time of high spread. This means avoiding crowds and forgoing New Year’s celebrations with people outside of those that you live with. It is also means that when you are in an indoor setting, in your own home or anyone else’s home, where people who you do not live with are present, masks should be worn.

An important component of staying safe at this time of high spread, and in this holiday season, is to think ahead. Thinking ahead of ways to get our shopping and errands run using curbside, online and delivery options and thinking ahead to ways to have meaningful and fun connections without risking the spread of COVID. Rethink New Year’s celebrations in this time of unprecedented spread by finding an outdoor area to sit with your family and watch fireworks away from others, recreating a festive party atmosphere in your own home for those you live with, or by utilizing online tools to spend your holidays virtually with family outside the home through Zoom or other platforms.

It’s up to all of us flatten the curve so our hospitals do not get into a situation where care is less than optimal for our patient population. I’m proud of the way North Texas has risen to the challenge again and again and I know we will do it with this latest surge,” 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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