



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**December 31, 2020**

### **Dallas County Reports 1,774 New Positive 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Cases and 17 Deaths Including 356 Probable Cases**

**DALLAS** -- As of 12:00 pm December 31, 2020, Dallas County Health and Human Services is reporting 1,774 additional positive cases of 2019 novel coronavirus (COVID-19) in Dallas County, 1,418 confirmed cases and 356 probable cases. There is a cumulative total of 172,165 confirmed cases (PCR test). There is a cumulative total of 21,153 probable cases (antigen test). A total of 1,628 Dallas County residents have lost their lives due to COVID-19 illness.

The additional deaths being reported today includes the following:

- A man in his 40's who was a resident of the city of Cedar Hill. 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 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 Dallas. He was found deceased at home, and had underlying high risk health conditions.
- A woman in her 50's who was a resident of the city of Dallas. She 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 Rowlett. He was found deceased 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 was found deceased at work, and had underlying high risk health conditions.
- A woman in her 60's who was a resident of the city of Irving. She had been critically ill in an area hospital 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 man in his 60's who was a resident of the city of Dallas. He was found deceased at home.
- A man in his 60's who was a resident of the city of Garland. He had been hospitalized, and had high risk 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 the city of Grand Prairie. She 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 woman in her 70's who was a resident of the city of Dallas. She was found deceased at home, and had underlying high risk health conditions.
- A woman in her 70's who was a resident of the city of Carrollton. She 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 was found deceased at home, 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.

The provisional seven-day average of daily new confirmed and probable cases (by date of test collection) for CDC week 51 was to **1,787**, which is a rate of **67.8** daily new cases per 100,000 residents. The percentage of respiratory specimens testing positive for SARS-CoV-2 remains high, with **26.5%** of symptomatic patients presenting to area hospitals testing positive in week 51 (week ending 12/19/20). 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.

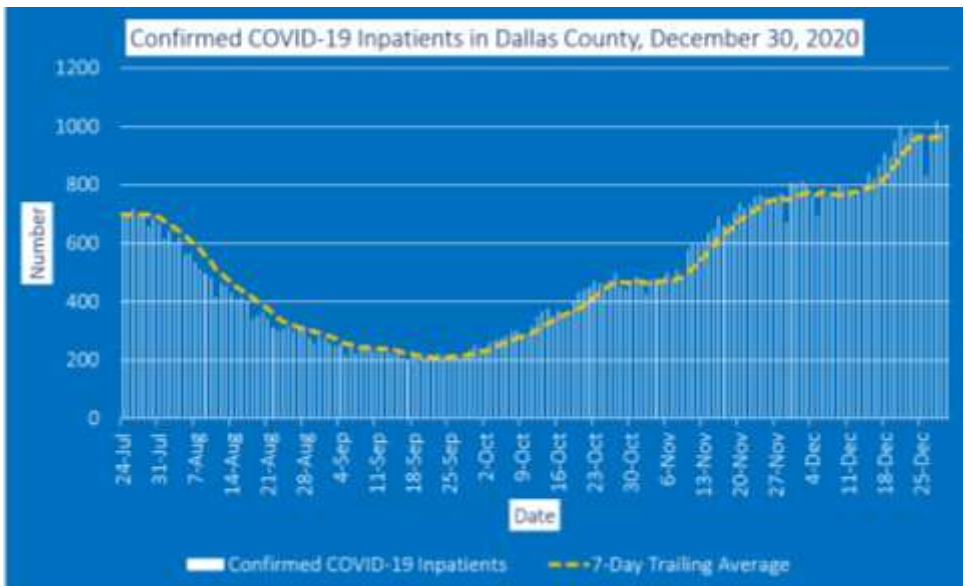
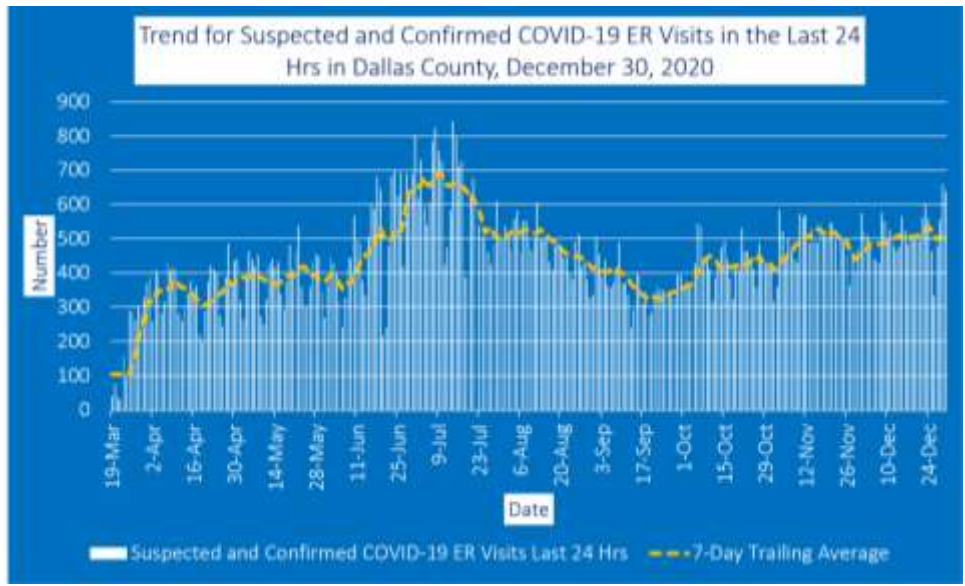
There are currently 102 active long-term care facility outbreaks. This is the highest number of long-term care facilities with active outbreaks reported in Dallas County since the beginning of the pandemic. This year, a total of 2,954 residents and 1,687 healthcare workers in long-term facilities in 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>.

Due to the observance of the New Year's holiday, Dallas County will not be releasing COVID-19 data on Friday, January 1. Reporting will resume Saturday, January 2. Saturday's reporting will include data processed Thursday evening and Sunday's reporting will include data from Friday and Saturday.

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 1,007 COVID-19 patients in acute care in Dallas County for the period ending on Wednesday, December 30. The number of emergency room visits for COVID-19 like symptoms in Dallas County was 638 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. Hospital numbers remain near record highs in the county and continue to rise regionally. While these high numbers are predictable, they are also preventable. Individual behavior changes 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, 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 report 1,774 new COVID cases and 17 deaths, 10 of which were from people found in their home or at work. This is due to a group of autopsies completed and reported by our Dallas County Medical Examiner.

There have been a lot of questions around persons over 65 and with underlying conditions, known as category 1B, getting shots and where they get those shots. We are working with the DFW Hospital Council and the Texas Department of State Health Services to streamline the process and make it easier for you to get reliable information about where the shots will be available. Currently, in Dallas County, we are still working through 1A and should be out of our current allocation by the end of today on those healthcare providers and other 1A members. Many of our hospitals likewise are still working through the 1A health providers but as more vaccine comes in, there will be more availability for 1B. We will get you information on these developments in real time as we work to get as many people vaccinated as quickly and as equitably as possible.

Tonight is New Year’s Eve and I hope you have a very safe and happy New Year’s celebration. Please remember doctors’ advice that it is best to celebrate only with the people that you live with and to avoid crowds. It won’t always be like this, and in fact, I believe next New Year’s will be one of large celebrations. But for now, with the lack of space in our hospitals and the unprecedented high spread of COVID, we ask everyone to make those small sacrifices in the spirit of patriotism to keep our community and our country stronger until the vaccine is available for everyone who wants it and sufficient time has passed for the vaccine to be effective in protecting against the virus.

I’m proud of the courage you’ve shown throughout 2020 and it’s been an honor to serve you through this terrible year. May 2021 be a better year for all of us,” 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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