



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 15, 2020

Dallas County Reports 1,947 New Positive 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Cases and 6 Deaths Including 398 Probable Cases

DALLAS -- As of 12:00 pm December 15, 2020, Dallas County Health and Human Services is reporting 1,947 additional positive cases of 2019 novel coronavirus (COVID-19) in Dallas County, 1,549 confirmed cases and 398 probable cases. There is a cumulative total of 147,591 cases (PCR test). There is a cumulative total of 16,201 probable cases (antigen test). A total of 1,391 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 Dallas. She had been critically ill in an area hospital, and had underlying high risk health conditions.
- A man in his 50'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 50'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 Dallas. 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 Dallas. She 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 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 **1,560**, which is a rate of **56.6** 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 has increased, 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.

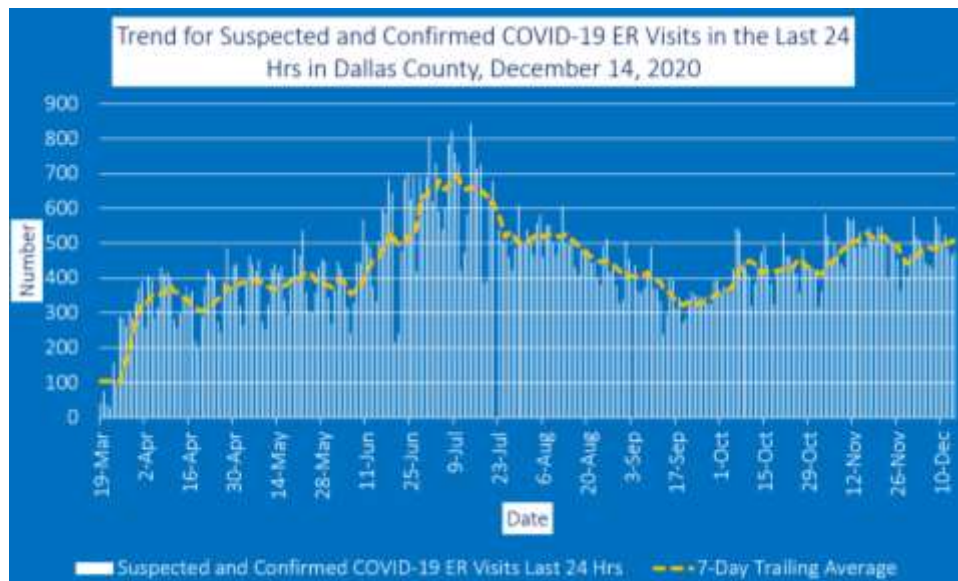
There are currently 97 active long-term care facility outbreaks. Over the past 30 days, a total of 928 COVID-19 cases have been reported from these facilities, including 364 staff members. Of these cases 35 have been hospitalized, and 41 have died, including 2 deaths of staff members. Twenty-six outbreaks 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 166 cases, including 8 hospitalizations. One facility has reported 89 COVID-19 outbreak cases since October.

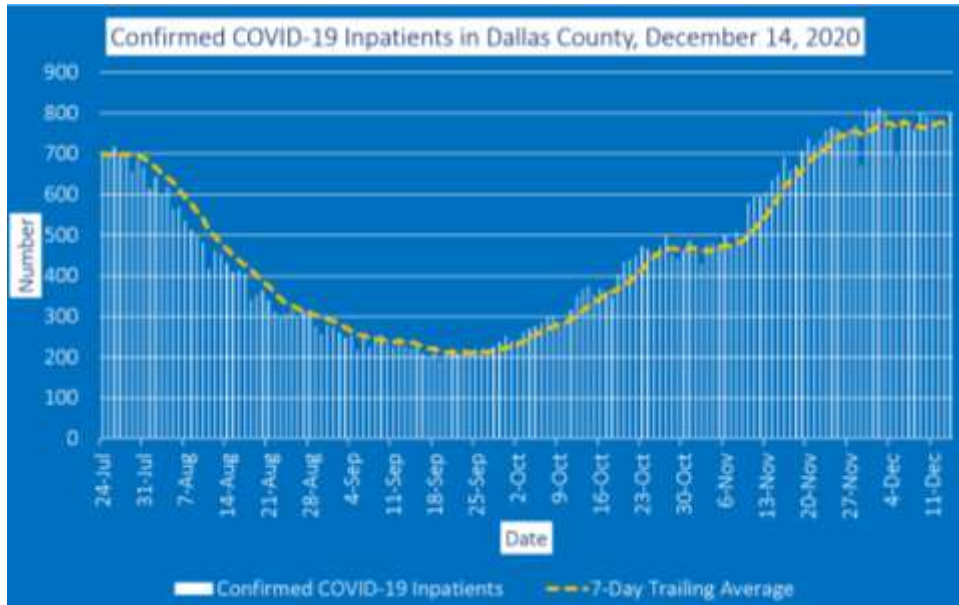
Of all confirmed cases requiring hospitalization to date, more than two-thirds have been under 65 years of age. Diabetes has been an underlying high-risk health condition reported in about a third of all hospitalized patients

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. Tuesday's summary is forthcoming.

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 800 COVID-19 patients in acute care in Dallas County for the period ending on Monday, December 14. The number of emergency room visits for COVID-19 like symptoms in Dallas County was 476 for the same time-period, which represents around 24 percent of all emergency department visits in the county according to information reported to the North Central Texas Trauma Regional Advisory Council. UTSW modeling predicts hospitalizations could be as high as 900 in Dallas County and 1,250 in Tarrant County by December 22. If these high projections are realized the strain on our North Texas facilities would be substantial. 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 1,947 new cases and six deaths to our numbers for COVID. This also marks the first day of the COVID vaccine at Parkland Hospital, and in the coming days, more and more hospitals will get the vaccine, and will be able to give them to their healthcare heroes. In the coming days, we’ll begin the vaccinations in nursing homes, and as more vaccines are approved and production ramps up, more supply will become available. It will still be some time before the general public will have broad access to the vaccines with the government working to get it to people in the order of their degree of risk.

We must all use the tools available to us during this time of high spread and throughout this holiday season and New Year until the vaccine is widely administered and able to do its effect. The two biggest tools we have at our disposal are our masks, which the CDC advises should always be worn indoors when in buildings other than your own home and around other people in stationary outdoor settings as well. The other tool at our disposal is the vaccine of our patriotism and smart decision-making. Now nearly a year into the COVID worldwide pandemic, doctors and scientists know a great deal about how we can keep safe and the facts are clear: avoiding crowds and forgoing get-togethers is the best way to keep yourself, your family, your community and your country strong at this time of high spread. Please do your part and please have a safe and meaningful holiday season,” 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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