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Press Release

Hillsboro, TX –COVID-19 cases continue to increase in Texas. The Department of State Health Services (DSHS) reports Texas now has 1,396 confirmed cases of COVID-19 across 92 counties which have resulted in 18 deaths. Hill County has not had a confirmed case reported to DSHS to date.

“It’s important to remember that just because we have not had a confirmed case in Hill County, that doesn’t mean that COVID-19 is not here. Because of the limited number of tests available, health professionals are required to triage cases and make sure those who are most vulnerable have first opportunity to be tested,” said Hill County Judge Justin Lewis. “We appreciate the effort of Hill County residents to voluntarily comply with social distancing and limiting their movements to essential functions only, that is our best defense,” continued Lewis.

Texas, as well as the rest of the United States, is still in the acceleration phase of the pandemic meaning we have not yet peaked in the total number of new cases reported daily. Over 68,000 confirmed cases have been reported in the US with over 38,000 cases in the state of New York. Based on that information and advice of healthcare professionals, Governor Abbott issued a new executive order today requiring anyone entering Texas via air travel from the New York Tri-State Area or the city of New Orleans, Louisiana to self-quarantine for 14 days. The program will be managed and enforced by the Texas Department of Public Safety(DPS). Upon arrival in Texas, air travelers from these areas will complete a form listing the address of their quarantine location, and the DPS will conduct random checks to confirm quarantine guidelines are being followed. Failure to comply can result in criminal charges, a fine of up to \$1,000 and/or 180 days of jail time.

Community mitigation efforts are helpful to slow the spread of the Coronavirus, and that is important to keep our healthcare system from being overwhelmed and not having the ability to treat everyone who needs care. Staying home except for essential functions, covering your coughs, washing your hands, disinfecting highly used surfaces and practicing social distancing are actions everyone can take to help fight the spread of the Coronavirus. It is also important to remember individuals are urged to call ahead if you are seeking medical treatment for the virus or other issues. You can receive instructions on any changes to their intake process in response to the Coronavirus outbreak to help protect yourself and others.

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“Let me be clear, it is the efforts of Hill County Residents in adhering to the rules of the Federal and State executive orders and suggested guidelines for social distancing and hygiene that are keeping Hill County up and running,” said Lewis. “Without voluntary compliance, we will be forced to consider more extreme measures to ensure the safety and well-being of our residents”.

As of now, DSHS is reporting only 100 people of the 1,396 people confirmed to have COVID-19 have been hospitalized, but that number is expected to grow. Mild cases can be treated at home, and the Center for Disease Control has developed a self-checker tool to help people determine whether they should seek medical attention. The self-checker can be found on the DSHS website at www.dshs.texas.gov/coronavirus along with other information related to the Coronavirus outbreak. If you have extreme shortness of breath or other critical medical symptoms, you should seek help immediately.

People interested in monitoring updates on the situation will find the most current information on the Hill County Emergency Management Facebook Page. The County will also provide regular updates to *KHBR 1560 AM Radio* and the *Hillsboro Reporter*.

In addition, the County has an emergency notification system. If you would like to receive phone call, text or email updates as warranted, you can register with the Hill County Emergency Notification System. Visit the Office of Emergency Management website at www.hilloem.com, scroll to the bottom of the home page and click on emergency alerts. Follow the prompts to set up your account.