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Press Release**

**Hillsboro, TX** – The cumulative number of cases of COVID-19 remains at 10 in Hill County with some recoveries reported and the possibility of one death. The death is unconfirmed by DSHS and the local health authority at this time but there is strong evidence to believe it is true. Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) is currently reporting 14,624 cases in Texas with 318 fatalities. In addition, DSHS is reporting 1,409 people in Texas are currently hospitalized with COVID-19. 2,580 patients in Texas are estimated to have recovered from the illness.

“Yesterday we reported the numbers from Sunday showed a decrease in people across the state being hospitalized, but the number has increased back to a level close to what we saw on Friday,” said Hill County Judge Justin Lewis. “While we are seeing indicators that our community mitigation efforts are slowing the spread, the numbers also remind us that the fight is far from over,” continued Lewis. “As the Governor and Federal Government begin to discuss ways of slowly and safely reopening businesses and returning us to the pace of life we are more accustomed to, our job is to continue to practice our mitigation techniques to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus and make plans as to how we will keep each other safe as we open our society back up. We must stay vigilant to protect our loved ones, our friends and our way of life.”

“Our government is founded upon the idea that we citizens possess certain unalienable rights that include life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. These rights are not granted by the government but rather secured by it. While the government must do what it can to protect us from the current pandemic it must also secure our rights” Lewis said.

“In our present situation that means we must begin to design and execute a plan that will balance the need to slow the spread of this virus but at the same time protect our rights to a free and open society. We must start the process of reopening our society but continue our fight against COVID-19. We can do both.” continued Judge Lewis.

Information being provided indicates we may be at or near the peak of the increase in the daily number of new cases. Monitoring of the numbers will continue for some time before we can determine whether or not we have hit the peak. Governor Abbott has said by the end of this week, we will receive information on the State’s plan for reopening the economy when the time is right.

In the meantime, there are a number of ways residents can continue to support local businesses in new ways. Today, April 14<sup>th</sup>, and weekly on Tuesdays, people across the Country are participating in the Great American Take Out event by eating at least one meal of the day from a pick- up or delivery order from local restaurants. Information on local efforts to support our businesses can be found by following information released by your local Chamber of Commerce.

“Hill County residents have never been afraid of hard work,” said Lewis. “Now is the time for us to put in the work to get to happier days. Sticking together by staying apart will help us overcome this just as we have every other challenge that has ever come before us,” continued Lewis. “I believe in our residents and

businesses, and I look forward to the day we can all celebrate having come through this, but we have a little more work ahead of us before we can get to that point. Please take care of one another.”

For the best information available on the spread of the Coronavirus across Texas, DSHS has a dashboard website available at <https://dshs.texas.gov/coronavirus/>. People interested in monitoring updates from Hill County 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](http://www.hilloem.com), scroll to the bottom of the home page and click on emergency alerts. Follow the prompts to set up your account.