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Press Release

Hillsboro, TX – As of noon March 23rd, Hill County still had no confirmed cases of COVID-19. However, there are 65 cases pending county assignment, so that could change at any moment. The most current numbers from the Department of State Health Services (DSHS) indicate 10,055 people in Texas have been tested for COVID-19 and 352 cases have been confirmed. Eight deaths have occurred, so it is imperative to remain vigilant and follow all mandates, social distancing guidelines and protective hygiene practices.

“While neighboring counties and the City of Hubbard have issued a shelter-in-place order, we have not had to move to that level, yet,” said Hill County Judge Justin Lewis. “We believe the efforts of our businesses and residents to be diligent with safety precautions and find new ways of conducting business while staying home and avoiding contact whenever possible are helping slow the spread in our area. However, now more than ever, it is imperative to strictly follow the Federal and State executive orders to protect ourselves and the ones we love. We are pleading with residents and businesses to take this seriously and take every precaution you can to keep this from moving through our County at a rate that our healthcare services cannot support.”

To strengthen our ability to care for the sick, Texas Governor Greg Abbott issued two new executive orders over the weekend. In a press release from Governor Abbott’s office, details of those orders were provided. The Governor directed all licensed health care professionals and facilities to postpone all surgeries and procedures that are not immediately, medically necessary to correct a serious medical condition or to preserve the life of a patient who without immediate performance of the surgery or procedure would be at risk for serious adverse medical consequences or death. In addition, Abbott also suspended certain regulations as requested by the Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) to allow for increased occupancy of hospital rooms, meaning hospitals will be able to treat more than one patient in a patient room.

A temporary Supply Chain Strike Force was established by Governor Abbott. They will be tasked with ensuring health care facilities have the supplies and resources they need to fight COVID-19. In addition, the new executive orders also waived certain regulations for nurses that will allow new graduates to enter the workforce more quickly and allow for retirees and nurses with expired licenses to re-enter the workforce to aid in the crisis situation.

While taking actions to strengthen our healthcare infrastructure, Governor Abbott refrained from issuing a statewide shelter-in-place order citing the diversity of conditions in counties across the state as the main reason.

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He encouraged the leaders in major metro areas to make the best decisions possible to protect their populations, and since, several shelter-in-place orders have come out. The City of Hubbard has issued an order, and the two shelter-in-place orders issued by metro areas closest to Hill County are for McLennan and Dallas County. We encourage you to visit the websites of any jurisdiction issuing a shelter-in-place directive, because the details of each will be unique. Even if your region is not covered by a shelter-in-place order, there are still restrictions to adhere to including maintaining a minimum of six feet of space between you and others and gathering in groups of no more than 10 people.

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.