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**HILL COUNTY JUDGE**

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**Date: May 11, 2020 - For Immediate Release**  
**Press Release**

**Hillsboro, TX** – The number of reported COVID-19 cases in Hill County held steady over the weekend and remains at 19 according to the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) report. Of those, DSHS shows 8 recoveries, 10 active cases, and 1 deceased. Statewide numbers report 39,869 cases in Texas with 1,525 patients hospitalized, and 1,100 fatalities. An estimated 21,713 individuals are listed as recovered from the virus while 17,056 are still believed to be active cases.

“As the State and Federal Governments continue to lift restrictions imposed during the spread of COVID-19, there is a surge of new cases expected,” said Hill County Judge Justin Lewis. “We must take responsibility for our own actions to continue to protect ourselves and others and ensure a successful reopening for our businesses,” continued Lewis. “Hill County has always risen to the occasion, and I know we will do it again,” stated Lewis.

Hill County is served by the DSHS Public Health Region 7 (PHR 7). DSHS PHR 7 has been responsible for contacting individuals infected with COVID-19 and discussing procedures for self-quarantine and gathering information on people they may have come in contact with who might have been exposed to the illness as well. Once those people are identified, DSHS PHR 7 has been contacting them to make them aware of their possible exposure and how they should proceed to best protect themselves and others. Today, Hill County received correspondence from DSHS PHR 7 to advise of a change in the procedure. DSHS PHR 7 will continue to contact infected individuals and gather information on their close contacts, but instead of following up with those people, DSHS PHR 7 staff will enter the information into an electronic system, Texas Health Trace. From there a team of trained personnel at the state level will be responsible for reaching out to those with potential exposure to advise them on how to proceed.

This change in procedure should guarantee that anyone who has been in close contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 will be contacted within 48 hours of the State being notified of their exposure. An additional benefit is DSHS PHR 7 staff will be able to focus their efforts on contacting infected individuals and gathering information from them more quickly as well.

“Rapid identification of infected individuals and those who have been exposed is one of our greatest resources in limiting the spread in our area,” said Lewis. “We are hopeful this change in procedure will be beneficial, and we want everyone to be aware of how it will work, so the State’s attempt to reach out to everyone will not be ignored.” finished Lewis.

Consumers and business owners seeking information on the guidelines to follow as operations reopen can visit <https://gov.texas.gov/organization/opentexas>.

Information on the spread of the Coronavirus across Texas is available at the DSHS dashboard website, <https://dshs.texas.gov/coronavirus/>. To monitor updates from Hill County, the most current information will be provided on the Hill County Emergency Management Facebook Page and *KHBR 1560 AM Radio* and the *Hillsboro Reporter*.