



## HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Public Health Emergency Preparedness (PHEP)

**William Clay Brown, MD**

Local Health Authority

**Mary Beth Bess, RN, MSN, FNP-BC**

Health Services Director

**Kevin D. Crump, AAS**

PHEP Coordinator

Public Health Statement

Issued July 15, 2020

Over the past few days, several news outlets have reported that an Anahuac resident who tested positive for COVID-19 was flown by medical helicopter to a hospital in El Campo because closer facilities did not have available emergent care bed space.

Chambers County Public Health has received many questions about this report and can confirm that it is, in fact, true.

Additionally, we can report that a second Chambers County resident was flown by Careflight Jet to a hospital in Dallas for care. The reason was the same: bed space is limited in area hospitals.

COVID-19 has become a hospitalization and healthcare crisis that is affecting everyone in need – both COVID-19 patients and those with other illnesses. As long as this crisis persists, local healthcare providers will most likely have no choice but to continue long distance hospital transfers.

In fact, the Chambers County Emergency Medical Service (CCEMS) has instituted their Alternative Destination Protocol due to the lack of available bed space for all patients in area facilities. The average wait time for any CCEMS call has increased from two hours at the beginning of June to nearly six hours as personnel are spending additional time at hospitals, waiting for patients to be admitted.

In light of the increasing number of COVID-19 cases in Chambers County and the decreasing availability of bed space at regional hospitals, below are a few numbers that we do not normally break down (utilizing data as of July 14, 2020):

State of Texas Population – 28,995,881

- Total Number of COVID-19 Cases in Texas – 282,365
  - .97 percent of Texas residents have tested positive for COVID-19
- Total Number of COVID-19 Related Deaths in Texas – 3,432
  - 1.2 percent of Texans diagnosed with COVID-19 have died
- Average Number of New COVID-19 Cases in Texas Daily (June 14 to July 14, not Including TCDJ Data) – 5,773
- Average Number of New COVID-19 Related Deaths Daily (June 14 to July 14, Not Including TCDJ Data) – 41

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Chambers County, Texas Population – 42,320

- Total Number of COVID-19 Cases in Chambers County – 625
  - 1.47 percent of Chambers County residents have tested positive for COVID-19
- Total Number of COVID-19 Related Deaths in Chambers County – 5
  - 0.8 percent of Chambers County residents diagnosed with COVID-19 have died
- Average Number of New COVID-19 Cases Daily (June 14 to July 14) - 14

State of Texas Hospital Information (as of July 14, 2020)

- Lab Confirmed COVID-19 Patients Currently in Texas Hospitals – 10,569
- Total Texas Staffed Hospital Beds – 55,017
  - 19.21 percent of Total Texas Staffed Hospital Beds are Currently Occupied by COVID-19 Patients
- Available Texas Hospital Beds – 11,402
- Available Texas ICU Beds – 949
- Available Texas Ventilators – 5,051
- Average Total Hospitalizations by Day (June 14 to July 14) – 6,288
- Average Change in Hospitalizations by Day (June 14 to July 14) – +276

Chambers County is below the state average for Total Number of COVID-19 Related Deaths. That is very important and we want to continue that trend. However, there have been five Chambers County deaths related to COVID-19. While that is below the average percentage of COVID-19 deaths for the state, that is still five too many.

Data is important, but we encourage you all to see beyond the numbers and remember that each statistic ultimately represents a human being.

Each positive case represents a person who is isolated at their home for a minimum of 10 days. If this person is an adult, they are most likely unable to work during this period. If this person is a child, then their primary caregiver is unable to work during this time so that they can care for the child. Either way, the potential for lost income is high.

Each hospitalized case represents a person who is potentially missing work and incurring unexpected medical bills. In addition, every hospital bed occupied by a COVID-19 patient is a bed that is unavailable for any person who has any illness – COVID-19 or not.

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Each death represents the lost life of someone's loved one.

The reach of COVID-19 is widespread. It affects the health and wellbeing of Chambers County residents, but also our economy.

We encourage each of you to remember that we all have a part to play in protecting our families, our community and ourselves. We each have to take personal responsibility for our actions and do what we can to slow the spread of COVID-19 in Chambers County.

As always, we are happy to answer any health-related questions. Please call us at 409-267-2731.

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