Matagorda County Emergency Operation Center Press Release

July 2, 2020 / 1700 hours / (5 pm)

For Immediate Release:

Matagorda County Health Officials have **reported 67 new COVID-19 cases today**. This includes 13 positive cases from our local health organizations plus 54 positive cases from the State of Texas’ mobile COVID-19 testing initiative conducted in late June at the Bay City Civic Center.

The positive test results from the mobile testing initiative at the Bay City Civic Center revealed additional COVID-19 cases in Bay City, El Maton, Van Vleck, Palacios, Matagorda, and Markham. The communities of Blessing, Pledger, Cedar Lane and Midfield are also managing active COVID-19 cases as previously reported.

Matagorda County now has a total COVID-19 case count of 299, with 65 reported as recovered and 5 reported as deceased. The county’s active case count is now 229.

Matagorda Regional Medical Center **reported 16 patients seeking care at the hospital** for COVID-19 today, and offered the following video message about the status of their hospital as COVID-19 cases continue to rise in Matagorda County: <https://youtu.be/R_H1IpqqwKA>

The Palacios Community Medical Center reports 51 negative and five (5) pending Covid-19 cases.

The details on all of the positive cases of COVID-19 are being posted on the Matagorda Regional Medical Center dashboard.

<https://www.matagordaregional.org/covid19>

According to The Texas Tribune,

Gov. Greg Abbott issued a nearly statewide mask mandate Thursday as Texas scrambles to get its coronavirus surge under control.

The order requires Texans living in counties with 20 or more positive COVID-19 cases to wear a face covering over the nose and mouth while inside a business or other building open to the public, as well as outdoor public spaces, whenever social distancing is not possible. But it provides several exceptions, including children who are younger than 10 years old, people who have a medical condition that prevents them from wearing a mask, people who are eating or drinking and people who are exercising outdoors.

Abbott’s order specifies at least one group of people is not exempted from the order: “any person attending a protest or demonstration” with over 10 people who cannot socially distance.

Abbott released a video message along with the order, saying the latest coronavirus numbers in the state "reveal a very stark reality."

"COVID-19 is not going away," he said. "In fact, it’s getting worse. Now, more than ever, action by everyone is needed until treatments are available for COVID-19."

In the video, Abbott reiterated his resistance to returning the state to the roughly month-long stay-at-home order he issued in April. He said Texans "must do more to slow the spread without locking Texas back down." He also said his latest announcement is "not a stay-at-home order" but "just recognizes reality: If you don't go out, you are less likely to encounter someone who has COVID-19."

"We are now at a point where the virus is spreading so fast there is little margin for error," Abbott said.

Abbott's announcement came a day after the number of new daily cases in Texas, as well as hospitalizations, reached new highs again. There were 8,076 new cases Wednesday, over 1,000 cases more than the record that was set the prior day.

Hospitalizations hit 6,904, the third straight day setting a new record. The state says 12,894 beds are still available, as well as 1,322 ICU beds.

Abbott has been particularly worried about the positivity rate, or the share of tests that come back positive. That rate, presented by the state as a seven-day average, has jumped above its previous high of about 14% in recent days, ticking down to 13.58% on Tuesday. That is still above the 10% threshold that Abbott has long said would be cause for alarm amid the reopening process.

First-time offenders of Abbott's order will receive a written or verbal warning. Those who violate the order a second time will receive a fine of up to $250. Every subsequent violation is punishable also by a fine of up to $250. The order specifics that no one can get jail time for a violation.

Abbott's order is effective as of 12:01 p.m. Friday.