

For Immediate Release

April 3, 2020

From: Office of County Judge Joe Weber and Office of Emergency Management, Craig Moreau

April 2nd represented our largest single day increase in cases of Novel Coronavirus COVID-19 in Fayette County since the onset of the pandemic. In one day the case count more than doubled, going from 4 confirmed cases, to 10 confirmed cases. We expect this number to continue to rise because of the amount of contact some infected individuals had with each other, and with the community. This contact is being investigated closely, and all affected businesses have been notified and appropriate sterilizations actions performed.

Because of the increased community spread of the virus, an emergency meeting was held with representatives from every known medical provider in our county. All in attendance were placed in facemasks, and maintained social distancing throughout.

Fayette County EMS Directors, area doctors, nurses, and nursing home administrators discussed the details of recently confirmed cases and presented ideas on how to protect our most vulnerable populations. The agreed upon actions that include, but are not limited to:

- Consolidating the monitoring of known and highly suspected cases with the assistance of Fayette County nurses on generous loan from the school districts.
- Continuing efforts with the dispatch center to protect first responders and limit exposure to all patients which is proven to reduce transmission from patient to responder and responder to patient.
- Centralizing a testing location in Fayette County
- Changing of EMS and hospital treatment and transport protocols.
- Requesting additional Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) from the Fayette County, State of Texas, and United States strategic reserves.
- Distributing sanitation supplies for medical providers in cooperation with the Agriculture Extension Agents.

- Developing methods to provide local alternatives to the overburdened State Health Services.
- Developing methods to increase the information delivered to and received from Epidemiology teams.

These methods and the continued help from community volunteers and faith-based institutions will give us the best chance to deal with every new challenge that this global pandemic presents to Fayette County.

Description of cases: The cases are spread throughout our county, and represent a cross section of citizens that are here. We have men and women ranging in age from 20's to 80's, and vary in vocation, socioeconomic identification, and culture. We have cases that have been in our county for their whole life, and those who were only visiting when they began to feel ill. Every citizen should know that everyone represents a possibility to spread the virus.

Specific Information:

- McDonalds in La Grange announced that one case was a store employee that developed symptoms and was then tested. Regional Epidemiologists deemed the store safe to re-open after measures were taken to clean the store in line with industry standards and noted the risk to patrons was "low to no risk".
- At least two of the confirmed cases have been hospitalized at some point.
- A cluster of the cases were located in the central/southern part of the county, and measures have been taken to ensure these individuals comply with stay-at-home orders that were issued to them by city officials.
- Several cases were reported and then confirmed through reports from Fayette county citizens instead of through State Health Services. We encourage citizens to assist us in our mission to keep vulnerable populations safe by passing along relevant information to our Emergency Operations Center.

Fayette County remains strong, resilient, and ready to face this challenge together just as we have faced many challenges in the past. It is imperative to follow all local, state and federal directives in order to control the spread of this deadly virus.