



City of Wichita Falls

Wichita Falls-Wichita County Public Health District

1700 Third St. | Wichita Falls, TX 76301 | 940-761-7800 | www.health.wichitafallstx.gov

November 25, 2020

As the COVID-19 infection rates escalate in our community, we are calling on residents of Wichita County to do your part. We are at a critical turning point and the decisions we make in the coming days have the ability to directly affect the health of our community in either a positive or negative manner.

Since March, more than 6,600 Wichita County residents have tested positive for COVID-19 and 122 people have died. There are more than 75 Wichita County residents hospitalized right now. The patients being seen are generally sicker than they were in the spring and summer. The regional critical care facility, United Regional Health Care System, has been operating at or near full critical care capacity for the past month, largely due to a lack of available staff. As community transmission increases, hospital staff are increasingly becoming COVID positive or are quarantined. At the current rate of infection, it is projected that Wichita County could see an average of 1,000+ new cases per week before the end of the year.

If we do not see increased compliance with masking and social distancing, our local health resources are going to continue to be strained, potentially even overwhelmed – affecting all illnesses, both COVID and non-COVID. For patients with life-threatening illnesses and injuries, they will receive the lifesaving care they need – it just may not look like what they traditionally expect. For example, patients may have to stay in the Emergency Department after initial treatment while waiting for a bed to become available, if they are admitted to the hospital.

We have all taken extraordinary measures to keep each other safe, from our healthcare facilities, schools and universities to local businesses and churches. Effective vaccines are on the horizon, but right now the virus is still taking the lives of those we love. As the holidays approach, we are entering a period of time of significant increased risk. We must consider creative, alternative ways to celebrate safely, that do not involve gatherings with others outside your main household.

We must also all be proactive to stop the continued spread of COVID-19 in Wichita County. We must continue to wear a mask and practice social distancing. The actions we take individually can protect our healthcare workers, our children, our elderly and each other. We must be committed to each other, our community, and to slowing the spread of COVID-19.

Signed,

Lou Kreidler
Wichita Falls - Wichita County
Public Health Director

Darron Leiker
City Manager
City of Wichita Falls

Wichita Falls Mayor and City Council

Wichita County Judge and Commissioners

Phyllis Cowling
President and CEO
United Regional Health Care System

Jerry Myers, MD
CEO/Medical Director
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