



Good Morning,

Yesterday afternoon I attended a Coronavirus Town Hall hosted by Representative Colin Allred and led by Dr. Huang, the director of Dallas County Health and Human Services (DCHHS) and Dr. Perl, UT Southwestern Chief of the Division of Infectious Disease and Geographic Medicine. They assured us that they are working closely with all major players across the county from hospitals, schools, homeless shelters and government officials to be prepared for an outbreak should it occur.

Shortly after this meeting, we received the following update from DCHHS. I want to reiterate the need to prepare, especially for those in our community who are elderly or have pre-existing conditions that could put them at higher risk. Limited testing has been conducted in the area, and, as more tests become available, it is possible that we will find that the virus is already in our community. :

While there are currently no confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Dallas County, we are preparing for any level of response that may be needed. It is not the time to panic, but it is the time to prepare. As part of our preparation, we are reaching out to organizations that serve homeless individuals to encourage you to prepare a plan to respond to a potential COVID-19 outbreak in Dallas County. While the CDC is still developing guidance specific to organizations that serve the homeless, the CDC has issued guidance for community-based organizations that can help you begin to prepare. Some of the recommendations from the [CDC guidance for community-based organizations](#) include:

- *Update your existing emergency operations plan*
- *Identify services that might be limited or temporarily discontinued during an outbreak.*
- *Promote the practice of everyday preventive actions, including routine hand washing (per Dr. Perl this can decrease the spread of the virus up to 50%), covering your sneeze or cough with a tissue, and regular environmental cleaning.*
- *Provide COVID-19 prevention supplies at your organization, such as soap, hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol, tissues, trash baskets, and disposable facemasks.*
- *Identify space that can be used to separate sick people (if possible)*
- *Review your process for planning events, programs, and services. Identify actions to take if you need to temporarily postpone or cancel events, programs, and services.*
- *Update your emergency communication plan for distributing timely and accurate information. Identify and address potential language, cultural, and disability barriers associated with communicating COVID-19 information to workers and those you serve.*

Additionally, you need to prepare your organization as a business for the effect that

a potential COVID-19 outbreak would have on your operations, such as the loss of staff or volunteers due to illness. The CDC has issued interim guidance for businesses and employers, which includes considerations for determining how to respond to a potential COVID-19 outbreak. Some of the key considerations are:

- *Prepare for possible increased numbers of employees or volunteers absences due to illness in employees and their family members, or due to employees needing to stay home to watch their children if schools or after school programs are suspended*
- *Cross-train personnel to perform essential functions so that the workplace can operate even if key staff members are absent*
- *Be prepared to change your business practices if needed to maintain critical operations (e.g., identify alternative suppliers, prioritize customers, or temporarily suspend some of your operations if needed).*

DCHHS will continue to provide updates to the community about COVID-19. Attached is a Frequently Asked Question handout with additional information on best practices and you can also visit the DCHHS COVID-19 webpage, which can be found [HERE](#). You can also call DCHHS at 972-692-2780 between the hours of 8:00 AM - 3:30 PM, Monday - Friday.

We strongly encourage you to utilize and share these resources. Once the CDC has released guidelines for organizations that serve homeless individuals, we will distribute that information.

[COVID -19 FAQs \(English\)](#)

[COVID - 19 FAQs \(Spanish\)](#)

For detailed information regarding the coronavirus, please visit the [CDC website](#).

Dallas County Health and Human Services is the centralized resource for health safety in Dallas County. Please visit their [website](#) for more information. The City of Dallas has additional information on their [website](#).

John Hopkins University created this interactive map to track the coronavirus world-wide. Find the [desktop version here](#) and the [mobile version here](#).

While the City, County, State and Federal government will be working closely to contain the virus, we have a collective responsibility to maintain healthy habits. If you are sick, please stay home. And, I cannot emphasize this enough, wash your hands thoroughly for at least 20 seconds frequently throughout the day.

If you have any questions or concerns, please reach out to my Council Liaison, Sarah Evans, by phone at 214-670-3816 or email at sarah.evans@dallascityhall.com.

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