

Office of the County Judge
Coryell County, Texas

For Immediate Release
January 6, 2021 – Gatesville, Coryell County, Texas

On January 5, 2021, at 3:00pm, Coryell County Judge Roger Miller was notified by Dr John Hellerstedt, Commissioner of the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS), that Trauma Service Area (TSA) L, comprised of Bell, Coryell, Hamilton, Lampasas, Milam, and Mills Counties, is now identified as a high hospitalization area. A high hospitalization area is defined as:

Any Trauma Service Area (TSA) that has had seven consecutive days in which the number of COVID-19 hospitalized patients as a percentage of total hospital capacity exceeds 15 percent, until such time as the Trauma Service Area has seven consecutive days in which the number of COVID-19 hospitalized patients as a percentage of total hospital capacity is 15 percent or less.

During the period from December 29, 2020 – January 4, 2021, TSA L exceeded the 15% threshold.

According to Governor Abbott's Executive Order GA-32, enacted on October 7, 2020, "In areas with high hospitalizations..., any business establishment that otherwise would have a 75 percent occupancy or operating limit may operate at up to only 50 percent." All businesses, restaurants, and other service providers operating in Coryell County, except those exempted in the executive order, are required to reduce their occupancy limit to 50%, effective 11:59 pm, January 6, 2021. This occupancy reduction shall remain at no more than 50% until TSA L has seven consecutive days below the 15% COVID hospitalization rate.

Additionally, hospitals and surgical centers within the TSA are no longer allowed to perform elective surgeries.

Although establishments operating as a bar are required to close, Judge Miller is suspending that requirement pending a response from the Governor's Office for an exemption for Coryell County. Currently there are only three establishments in Coryell County operating as a bar – American Legion Post 42 in Gatesville, and Moose Lodge 2029 and Fubar in Copperas Cove. "I'm fully aware of the Governor's Order and it's intent. But I have no reason to believe our three bar establishments are significantly responsible for the increased COVID cases in Coryell County or within TSA L. This is simply a case of one executive order not being appropriate for all 254 counties. And I see no reason why our three establishments should be penalized," Miller stated.

Coryell County has been experiencing sharp increases in the number of COVID positive tests over the past two months. July through mid-November, new cases were holding steady averaging approximately 35 cases per week. Beginning with the week ending November 19, that average jumped to more than 120 new cases per week for the next five weeks. The County closed out 2020 with two consecutive weeks of almost 250 new cases per week and set a new one week high of 253 confirmed cases.

While Coryell County is not solely responsible for the increase in hospitalized COVID patients in TSA L, it certainly has contributed. "We are seeing a strain on the healthcare system throughout the region and State. This is exactly what we wanted to avoid when the Governor shut down the State in late March of last year. If the rise in infection rate continues, doctors and medical staff locally and regionally will have

to start selecting who receives inpatient treatment, and I believe that may be the case already”, Miller stated.

Additional information will be updated on the County's website.

More information about Coryell County services, including Emergency Management and County Disaster Declarations, may be found at <https://www.coryellcounty.org>



January 5, 2021

The Honorable Roger Miller
Coryell County Judge
800 E. Main Street, Ste A
Gatesville, Texas 76528

Via electronic mail to countyjudge@coryellcounty.org

Dear Judge Miller:

On Wednesday, October 7, 2020, Governor Abbott issued Executive Order GA-32, which supersedes GA-30. Significantly, GA-32 updates the thresholds for areas with high hospitalizations.

The new definition of areas with high hospitalizations is:

Any Trauma Service Area (TSA) that has had seven consecutive days in which the number of COVID-19 hospitalized patients as a percentage of total hospital capacity exceeds 15 percent, until such time as the Trauma Service Area has seven consecutive days in which the number of COVID-19 hospitalized patients as a percentage of total hospital capacity is 15 percent or less.

Under the criteria laid out in GA-32, your area, TSA L, meets the definition of a high hospitalization area and so may not conduct elective surgeries or reopen to the higher levels allowable under GA-32.

TSA L includes the following counties:

- Bell
- Coryell
- Hamilton
- Lampasas
- Milam
- Mills

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Data on hospitalizations may be found at dshs.texas.gov/ga32/.

GA-32 allows counties in TSAs with high hospitalizations to choose to operate at 75 percent capacity if:

- the county has fewer than 30 cases reported over the last 14 days, and
- the county judge submits an attestation to DSHS.

More information on this attestation process may be found at the link above.

If you have questions about this notice or your obligations under Executive Order GA-32, please contact us at coronavirus@dshs.texas.gov. Please enter "Executive Order 32" in the subject line for proper routing.

If you have questions specifically related to the hospitals' obligations under GA-32, please contact the Health and Human Services Commission at infohflc@hhs.texas.gov.

If you have questions specific to the impact on businesses regulated by the Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission, please visit tabc.texas.gov/coronavirus or contact TABC at questions@tabc.texas.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Hellerstedt", followed by a long horizontal line extending to the right.

John Hellerstedt, MD

cc: Mayors in Coryell County