

ATASCOSA COUNTY JUDGES REPORT

I need to discuss what I hope is the last gasp of COVID19 in our county. Just when we hoped the Delta variant was over, Omicron has surged up massively, much larger, much more infectious, and contagious. Here are some seven-day numbers as of 01/11/2022: Positive tests (452), case rate per 100k (883.62), % positivity (30.66), deaths, no data (less than 10), Percent of the population fully vaccinated (51.7%), new hospital admissions (28). I was just informed that the number for positives as of 3 pm on Tuesday, 01/11/2022 is now 680.

These numbers are startling and far exceed the numbers we experienced with the first and second strains of COVID19. I can remember when it first started. We were upset when our net positive rate was 5 or 6. However, it is all relative. The first strain was killing many of those who caught it. Our EMS was inundated with COVID emergency calls. Even though these numbers are way up, hospitalization is not. We learn that Omicron is not as severe (typically) as the previous strains. I have read that this variant does not affect the lungs (barring influenza and pneumonia complications). Hence, we have far fewer on ventilators and in hospital intensive care. All who are sick and pass away have my most sincere sympathies and prayers. Even one death, for whatever reason, is tragic and terrible.

This variant is sweeping through the county offices, so please have patience for the next few weeks. The Tax Office is back open but was closed. The Detention Centers are struggling to operate with those out sick and quarantining. The Yard at Precinct 2 is closed, with almost 90% of the personnel testing positive. CAST offices are closed. My office was closed with a positive, and we quarantined and worked from home. We returned as soon as we could test negative. All other offices will be impacted. All businesses struggling to get back open will be hurt. Now is a good time for everyone to carry over that "Christmas Spirit" and help one another.

My prayer is that this is the last push of COVID19 infections, and the virus will continue to dwindle in strength. I pray for it to STOP!

Thank you for listening.