



# Peter P. Flores

Texas Senator, District 19

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**CONTACT:**

Jamie Bennett

[jamie.bennett@senate.texas.gov](mailto:jamie.bennett@senate.texas.gov)

O: (512) 463-0119

## **Senator Flores Statement on Governor Abbott's Statewide Public Health Disaster Declaration for All Counties**

*Governor takes statewide measures to slow spread of coronavirus*

SAN ANTONIO – Senator Peter P. Flores issued the following statement on Governor Greg Abbott's statewide public health disaster declaration:

"Thank you Governor Greg Abbott for his leadership during this difficult time," said Sen. Flores. "Texas will respond in a robust and effective manner, working in conjunction with local governments and federal authorities. I encourage Texans to continue practicing good hygiene, taking care of one another, and taking precautions if feeling sick. Coronavirus can, and will, be defeated."

Governor Abbott declared the disaster today at a press conference alongside by Dr. John Hellerstedt (Commissioner, Department of State Health Services) and Chief W. Nim Kidd (Chief, Texas Division of Emergency Management), joined by other state leaders. Among other measures, the following are effective immediately:

- Texas public health labs have capacity to test 273 people daily, increase soon. As private labs come online, the ability to test will grow to several thousand weekly.
- San Antonio is the first city to open drive through testing labs, beginning today. Texas is hoping to open more similar drive through sites across the state over the next two weeks.
- Texas has asked insurers to waive costs on testing and telemedicine visits concerning coronavirus; many have agreed to comply. Uninsured individuals can be testing via public health at cost if they fulfill requirements. Uninsured individuals can also be tested via private labs though there could be an associated cost.
- **Texans should call 211 for more information on local testing.**
- Texas is seeking waivers from federal government for reduced lunch to continue providing food for those students that rely on them. Texas Education Agency Commissioner Mike Morath is hosting daily calls with all superintendents and education leaders.
- Disaster declaration allows:
  - Texas Department of Emergency Management to move all personnel and resources as needed.
  - Texas Attorney General pursue cases of price gouging.

- Office of the Governor to waive state laws that might hinder agency abilities.
- State agencies encouraged to facilitate telemedicine as able; provide flexible work and telework policies.
- Prioritize protection of most vulnerable populations by limiting visitations to: daycares, senior centers, senior nursing homes, etc. Additionally, limiting visitations to: prisons, jails, juvenile justice facilities, etc.
- Overall, Texas is prepared for this emergency and there is no need to stockpile supplies.
- Texans must do their part: vigilant about washing, disinfecting, avoid shaking hands, staying home if sick.

Should anyone feel sick, officials are urging Texans to consult first with local health departments. A complete list of coronavirus disease local health entities can found at the following link: <https://dshs.texas.gov/regions/coronavirus/>

Texas Health and Human Services continues to recommend the following practices to help prevent the spread of coronavirus:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.

Center for Disease Control and Prevention reports the following symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure:

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath

For more information, please visit the following CDC website: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

Texas Department of State Health Services Contact Information

DSHS COVID-19 Call Center: 1-877-570-9779

Hours: Monday – Friday, 7:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.

Email: [coronavirus@dshs.texas.gov](mailto:coronavirus@dshs.texas.gov)