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Press Release**

Hillsboro, TX – The Department of State Health Services (DSHS) has increased the number of COVID-19 cases for Hill County to sixteen as anticipated. The new patient is reported to be a male resident of Hillsboro in his forties. Statewide numbers report 27,054 cases in Texas with 1,702 patients hospitalized, 732 fatalities and an estimated 12,507 individuals recovered.

“As we reported yesterday, we knew this new case would be coming, but it is still concerning anytime our case number increases,” said Hill County Judge Justin Lewis. “This means that as we reopen our businesses and communities, we must still adhere to all social distancing guidelines and hygiene protocols and voluntarily wear face masks,” continued Lewis. “Following the guidance of our medical experts, taking responsibility for our own actions and caring for our neighbors is the safest and fastest way to move us through this situation.”

While the new executive orders issued by Governor Abbott this week begin a methodical process of opening Texas for commercial activities to begin increasing, the full report, Texans Helping Texans: The Governor’s Report to Reopen Texas, also cautions Texans that our vulnerable populations still need to be protected from contracting the virus. It lists several practices for residents 65 and older to use to protect themselves. The advice includes wearing a face mask and having anyone around you wear one, too. It also encourages the use of delivery services for securing groceries, take out food, and prescriptions. If someone needs help securing essentials, it recommends calling 2-1-1. Other suggestions include utilizing telemedicine services and staying connected to friends, family and neighbors on a regular basis through phone calls or the use of other technologies to help keep yourself mentally and emotionally healthy. To read the complete list of recommendations, visit <https://gov.texas.gov/uploads/files/organization/opentexas/OpenTexas-Report.pdf>.

“Many people have been staying home for almost seven weeks now, and we know it’s not easy for a number of reasons,” said Hill County Judge Justin Lewis. “But, believe me when I say it is a necessary part of protecting yourself and your loved ones,” stated Lewis. “The better we are at following the guidelines, the better condition we will be in when we come out of this. The process of reopening does not mean the danger is gone, but it does mean we need to give people the ability to resume normal activities as much as we can while doing it in a safe manner. We must use common sense and be smart about how we move forward if we want to continue being able to open up more and more. If not, we could see a resurgence of restrictions coming down from the State and Federal governments,” continued Lewis.

Residents should continue to take all precautions available to protect their households. If individuals or businesses need assistance during this time, please visit the website, www.raisinghill.com, for a listing of available resources in our area.

Information on the spread of the Coronavirus across Texas is available at the DSHS dashboard website, <https://dshs.texas.gov/coronavirus/>. To monitor updates from Hill County, the most current information will be provided on the Hill County Emergency Management Facebook Page and *KHBR 1560 AM Radio* and the *Hillsboro Reporter*.