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Press Release**

**Hillsboro, TX** – The 34<sup>th</sup> case of COVID-19 was confirmed for Hill County today. This case makes 10 new cases since the beginning of June reported by the Department of State Health Services (DSHS). Statewide numbers on the DSHS website as of 4:30pm show 83,680 cases in Texas with 2,166 patients hospitalized, and 1,936 fatalities. 55,258 of the cases are estimated to be recovered while 26,483 of the cases are still listed as active, according to DSHS.

“Announcing 10 new cases in 12 days is concerning, but what I find even more troubling is the geographic spread and ages of the new patients,” said Hill County Judge Justin Lewis. “Of the new cases, 5 are in Hillsboro, 2 in Bynum, and 1 each in Aquilla, Whitney and Penelope. The ages of the new patients are also discomfoting. We have our first cases of minors being infected with two of the new patients falling in the 10 to 19-years-old category. Additionally, 1 patient is in his 20s, 3 patients are in their 30s, 1 in their 40s, 2 in their 50s and 1 in their 60s. So, the demographics of those infected indicate the spread is affecting some of our younger populations,” continued Lewis. “While a bump in the number of cases was anticipated as restrictions loosened, the variety of ages and locations of the new patients tells me community spread must be occurring which means now more than ever, we must strengthen our resolve to protect one another.”

On June 3<sup>rd</sup> Governor Abbott filed Executive Order GA-26. This order allows restaurants to move to 75% indoor occupancy today, and in counties that have less than 10 active cases of COVID-19 and have an attestation filed with the DSHSA, other businesses (as applicable) may also move from 50% to 75% occupancy rates. The number of active cases in Hill County currently stands at 13, so only restaurants are allowed to move to the 75% occupancy at this time.

“I’m sure many of you have seen the reports that the Army Corp of Engineers has closed Walling Bend and Soldiers Bluff Parks at Lake Whitney due to large crowds gathering and not following social-distancing practices as well as other safety concerns,” stated Lewis. “Moving backward is not the direction we want to go, but with the recent spike in cases, the Corp of Engineers believed it was the best way to protect people. We want people to be out and about and enjoying their summer break, but we cannot forget that we have an ever-present danger in our midst. We must be cautious and use common sense to protect ourselves, our loved ones, our neighbors and our friends,” continued Lewis. “If we don’t control the spread of COVID-19, I’m afraid others will make the decision to close their operations as well, so I’m asking everyone to do their part and maintain your diligence in following the CDC guidelines to slow this spread.”

“In addition to an increase in our local numbers, we are seeing increases statewide, and today’s number of 2,166 people hospitalized with COVID-19 is an all-time high for our state. While we have medical infrastructure in place to handle the increase and even more, we must take proactive measures to ensure the virus doesn’t spread at a rate faster than what our hospitals can serve. We owe it to everyone who has

stood on the front lines of this fight from the beginning to do all we can to protect ourselves and our neighbors from getting sick,” finished Lewis

Please review information on the guidelines to follow as business operations and recreational activities reopen at <https://open.texas.gov/>

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*.