



**Commissioner John W. Hellerstedt, M.D.**

**DECLARATION OF A PUBLIC HEALTH DISASTER IN THE STATE  
OF TEXAS**

**August 17, 2020**

TO ALL TO WHOM THESE PRESENTS SHALL COME:

WHEREAS, Greg Abbott, Governor of Texas, issued a disaster proclamation on March 13, 2020, certifying under Section 418.014 of the Texas Government Code that the novel coronavirus (SAR-CoV-2, which causes the disease known as COVID-19) poses an imminent threat of disaster for all counties in the State of Texas; and

WHEREAS, Greg Abbott, Governor of Texas renewed the disaster proclamation under his authority under Section 418.014 of the Texas Government Code; and,

WHEREAS, I, John W. Hellerstedt, M.D., Commissioner of the Department of State Health Services, issued a public health disaster declaration on March 19, 2020, certifying that the introduction and spread of the communicable disease known as COVID-19 in the State of Texas has created an immediate threat, poses a high risk of death to a large number of people and creates a substantial risk of public exposure because of the disease's method of transmission and evidence that there is community spread in Texas; and

WHEREAS I have determined on each of the subsequent days, determined that COVID-19 continues to present an immediate threat, poses a high risk of death to a large number of people and creates a substantial risk of public exposure because of the disease's method of transmission and evidence that there is community spread in Texas; April 18, 2020, May 15, 2020, June 15, 2020 and July 15, 2020; and

WHEREAS I have determined today that COVID-19 continues to present an immediate threat, poses a high risk of death to a large number of people and creates a substantial risk of public exposure

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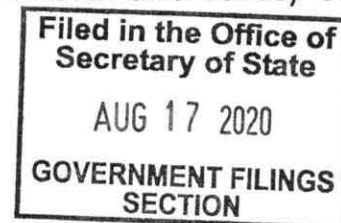
because of the disease's method of transmission and evidence that there is community spread in Texas.

THEREFORE, I, John Hellerstedt, M.D., Commissioner of Public Health, in accordance with the authority vested in me by Section 81.082(d) of the Texas Health and Safety Code, hereby declare a state of public health disaster for the entire State of Texas.

Pursuant to Section 81.002 of the code, each person shall act responsibly to prevent and control communicable disease. The following actions, taken immediately, will reduce and delay the spread of COVID-19:

- Individuals and communities shall immediately undertake hygiene, cleanliness and sanitation practices that are accessible, affordable and known to be effective against COVID-19.
- Individuals shall abide by Governor Greg Abbott's Executive Orders.
- Individuals who are known to have, or are under investigation or monitoring for COVID-19, shall adhere to the direction provided to them by duly authorized persons, including public health officials. Failure to abide by such direction may result in involuntary isolation for the purposes of preventing further community spread of COVID-19.
- Individuals who are ill, especially those with symptoms consistent with influenza or COVID-19, should isolate themselves at home until they recover. Such persons should only present for medical evaluation and treatment if their symptoms are such that they cannot continue to be cared for where they are.
- The Texas Department of State Health Services will continue to provide the most current and practical advice on how to control the spread of COVID-19 and encourages all Texans to seek additional information from a trusted source such as <https://www.dshs.texas.gov/coronoavirus/> or from the Centers for Disease Control at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/>.

Adherence to these rules and the sound public health principles that support them will provide optimal protection for the people of Texas. These measures are necessary to advance the health and safety of all Texans.



This declaration supersedes any previous public health disaster declaration.

Copies of this proclamation will be filed with applicable authorities.

Given under my hand this the  
17 day of August, 2020.

  
JOHN W. HELLERSTEDT, M.D.  
Commissioner of Public Health

ATTESTED BY:

  
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Ruth Hughs  
Secretary of State

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