



## Hidalgo County Commissioners Court

**Richard F. Cortez**  
County Judge

**David L. Fuentes**  
Commissioner, Precinct 1

**Eduardo "Eddie" Cantu**  
Commissioner, Precinct 2

**Joe M. Flores**  
Commissioner, Precinct 3

**Ellie Torres**  
Commissioner, Precinct 4

### OFFICE OF COUNTY JUDGE RICHARD F. CORTEZ

#### Public Affairs Division

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## PRESS RELEASE

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Friday, March 13, 2020

### **Hidalgo County Judge Richard F. Cortez Reacts to Emergency Declarations at State and National Level**

Given the emergency declarations by President Donald Trump at the national level and Governor Greg Abbott at the state level, Hidalgo County Judge Richard F. Cortez issued the following statement:

"We remain vigilant to the rapidly evolving situation around the country and our state. We are also keenly aware of the annual increase in domestic travelers coming through Hidalgo County for Spring Break and Mexican travelers coming through the county for Semana Santa for the remainder of this month.

As it stands at this moment, I do not intend to declare any local health emergency because Hidalgo County has not seen a single case in which a person has been confirmed positive for COVID-19. We have been working for months to prepare for any local outbreak, particularly now that we know the fast-moving nature of COVID-19 and the danger it can pose in particular for our elderly residents.

The moment we learn of any local instance of someone with COVID-19 in Hidalgo County, I intend to immediately declare a local health emergency and will suspend any mass gatherings in the county.

This declaration will initiate a carefully planned emergency operation center to respond to any outbreak and will pave the way for the necessary resources to mitigate the impact of the disease locally. Until that declaration is made, I urge residents of and visitors to Hidalgo County to exercise discretion when considering whether to attend any mass gathering. I would also advise people to consider the three guidelines provided by state health experts and the governor on Thursday as a basis for deciding whether to attend any mass gathering. This includes re-considering whether to attend any event in which more than 1,000 people are expected; taking into account the crowd density of any indoor or outdoor event; and deciding whether the mass gathering is essential or whether it is being held for leisure or entertainment.

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*Hidalgo County is home to one of the fastest growing regions in the nation. We provide health and justice to the over 800,000 residents of our county. We strive to be accessible and responsive to our citizens by providing excellent public service through the values of leadership, transparency, fairness, collaboration, respect and fiscal responsibility. Follow our social media feed at [www.co.hidalgo.tx.us/followus](http://www.co.hidalgo.tx.us/followus)*



I have full faith that Hidalgo County residents and visitors will make the right choices as our state and country contends with this pandemic and the challenges that it brings.”

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