



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

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RICHARD F. CORTEZ**

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NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tuesday, October 6, 2020

Hidalgo County no longer considered a high hospitalization area and, therefore, subject to higher occupancy levels

EDINBURG – Hidalgo County as well as other counties in the Rio Grande Valley, are no longer considered high hospitalization areas and, therefore, will be subject to higher occupancy levels ordered by Governor Greg Abbott in September, a state health official told Hidalgo County Judge Richard F. Cortez on Tuesday.

Governor Abbott relaxed occupancy standards across the state on September 17, allowing retail outlets; restaurants; office buildings; manufacturing facilities; gyms, museums and libraries to open up its occupancy to 75 percent of the facility's listed capacity – up from 50 percent. But the governor made exceptions for three areas of Texas – the Rio Grande Valley; the Laredo area; and the Victoria area – because hospitals in those regions had COVID-19 patient caseloads in excess of 15 percent of the hospital's caseload over a seven-day period.

Texas Health and Human Services Commissioner John Hellerstedt wrote to Judge Cortez on Tuesday that Trauma Service Area V (TSA-V), which includes Hidalgo County as well as Cameron, Starr and Willacy counties, were now below the 15 percent threshold and subject to the relaxed occupancy standards that Governor Abbott set out in his September executive order.

"As a result, as of October 6, 2020, all restaurants, retail stores, office buildings, manufacturing facilities, gyms and exercise facilities and classes, museums, and libraries in all counties in TSA-V may return to previous occupancy levels," Hellerstedt wrote in a letter to Judge Cortez.

"This demonstrates that the people of Hidalgo County are making positive strides in combating this virus, and that's welcome news," Judge Cortez said. Still, he urged caution, saying the virus remains active in the county.

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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