



## 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**

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## NEWS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Tuesday, October 13, 2020

### **County Judge decides not to immediately reopen Hidalgo County bars**

**EDINBURG** – After consulting with local health care experts who cited Center for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines that bars remain a high-risk venue for the spread of COVID-19, as well as speaking with the mayors of the county's 22 municipalities, Hidalgo County Judge Richard F. Cortez has decided it is premature to allow bars in the county to reopen.

"I am convinced that reopening bars this week – as Governor Greg Abbott is allowing with local consent – is too risky," Judge Cortez said. "We are making great strides in convincing more and more people to change their habits by wearing facial coverings and avoiding crowds. This is having a positive effect on slowing down the rate of infection locally."

But Judge Cortez pointed out that state officials had removed Hidalgo County from its list of high hospitalization areas just one day before Governor Abbott announced that county judges across the state could decide whether to open bars.

Instead, Judge Cortez has decided to wait to assess what effect, if any, other reopening measures may have locally. These measures include allowing covered businesses to increase its customer capacity to 75 percent of its listed occupancy – up from 50 percent.

"We continue to see double digit increases in our daily death count and triple digit increases in new positive cases," Judge Cortez said. "We must bring these numbers down."

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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)*