



## 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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## NEWS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Thursday, October 15, 2020

### **Hidalgo County, City of McAllen intervene with out-of-state bus arriving in South Texas after passenger dies and another tests positive for COVID-19**

**EDINBURG** –Local health and emergency management officials with Hidalgo County and the City of McAllen on Wednesday met a bus with out-of-state travelers who had been exposed to a passenger confirmed with COVID-19, Hidalgo County Judge Richard F. Cortez said Thursday.

The intervention came after health officials from Illinois alerted Hidalgo County officials of the situation Wednesday afternoon.

A bus that began traveling from an unknown city in Wisconsin loaded with passengers who were headed for South Texas and Northern Mexico stopped in Effingham, Illinois in the southwestern part of that state.

One of the passengers had collapsed on the bus and was unresponsive during the trip, prompting the bus driver to call for medical help. The passenger later died. A traveling companion later tested positive for COVID-19 and was hospitalized. First responders at the scene reported to Illinois health officials that several other passengers on the bus had been exposed while in their presence.

Once Hidalgo County officials were alerted to the situation and were told the bus was headed to McAllen, they began coordinating with state officials as well as officials with the City of McAllen.

The bus arrived at the downtown McAllen bus terminal just after 6:30 p.m. and was met by officials from Hidalgo County's Health and Human Services Department, Hidalgo County Emergency Management Division as well as officials from the City of McAllen's Emergency Management Department.

The passengers were temporarily sequestered on the bus until health officials could check for symptoms of COVID-19. Several of the passengers agreed to self-isolate. Still, Hidalgo County issued isolation orders. Several asymptomatic passengers were allowed to continue their travels with the knowledge of neighboring health departments who monitored their movements.

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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)*



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“We acted quickly to isolate the passengers and assess their health,” Judge Cortez said. “Hidalgo County residents should be assured that any passenger exhibiting symptoms of illness were convinced to self-isolate and we see no heightened danger to the community. Officials with the City of McAllen, as well as the state, were extremely helpful in this effort and we believe we contained any threat to residents of Hidalgo County.”

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