



Representative John Turner

District 114 | Email Update | March 13, 2020

Date: March 13, 2020
Subject: District 114 COVID-19 Updates

Friends and neighbors,

In the last several weeks, and especially in the last several days, we have been coming to grips with the challenge presented by the COVID-19 / coronavirus. News of university closings, stock market fluctuations, cancelled sporting events, and more has brought home the reality of the disruption this virus has created.

Slowing its spread and keeping our community safe must be top priorities. I would like to take this opportunity to provide a few updates and to make sure you are aware of several sources of useful information.

- Here in north Texas, as of this writing, there have been eight presumptive positive COVID-19 cases in Dallas County, four in Collin County, and one in Tarrant County. These numbers are likely to change as more testing is done.
- One of the cases in Dallas County is a case with no recent travel history, indicating community spread of the disease. Dallas County issued a local disaster declaration last night and has prohibited gatherings of 500 people or more in a single area.
- The two school districts covered by House District 114, Dallas and Richardson ISDs, will be on spring break next week. School officials are monitoring the situation to determine the best course of action for students, families, and faculty. DISD has announced contingency plans for remote learning, and RISD has issued coronavirus guidelines for those traveling abroad during spring break. Both districts canceled events, field trips, and other activities until further notice. DISD and RISD websites dedicated to this issue, which are linked below – please see those links for the latest information.
- Two north Dallas schools, Ursuline Academy and St. Rita Catholic School, have temporarily closed after determining that a member of the school community was either presumed to be positive or has shown symptoms consistent with COVID-19. Other schools, public and private, are continuing to monitor the situation and determine their response.

I have recently participated in conference calls with Governor Greg Abbott, the heads of several of our state agencies, County Judge Clay Jenkins, and Dallas County Health and Human Services Director Dr. Philip Huang. In the coming weeks, my office and I will continue to keep track of our state's and community's actions in responding to the coronavirus.

On this point, recent days have revealed areas in our public health infrastructure that need significant attention and improvement. For example, we must greatly expand our level of testing from where it is now, in order to better understand the situation, coordinate an effective response, and identify people who need treatment. I will be looking at ways to join with other public officials in helping to move that process forward as quickly as possible.

In the meantime, all of us have a role to play in helping to minimize the spread of the virus. The best advice remains to keep yourself informed and follow guidance from reputable sources. For Dallas residents, those sources include:

- The Centers for Disease Control (CDC): <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/summary.html>
- The Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS): <https://dshs.texas.gov/coronavirus/>. DSHS has also created a hotline that is open from 7 am to 6 pm, Monday through Friday, at (877) 570-9779.
- Dallas County Health and Human Services (DCHHS): <https://www.dallascounty.org/departments/dchhs/2019-novel-coronavirus.php>. Their coronavirus help number is 972-692-2780.
- Dallas County Public Health Emergency Declaration, order regarding public gatherings, and social distancing recommendations: <https://bit.ly/2vnbl7a>
- Dallas ISD: <https://www.dallasisd.org/covid19>
- Richardson ISD: http://www.risd.org/Group/Parents/Health_Services/Coronavirus.html

While the resources above are the appropriate places to go for information, our office is also available if we can help point you in the right direction. Our numbers are (214) 234-7625 (Dallas office) and (512) 463-0576 (Austin office), and our office email is District114.Turner@house.texas.gov.

It bears repeating that we should all continue to do the things we know can make a difference: wash our hands frequently, avoid touching our faces, clean commonly touched surfaces regularly, be prepared for changes in our daily routines, and base our decision-making upon the best scientific advice available. These simple steps can help protect our whole community, especially the elderly and those with underlying health conditions who are most at risk.

Finally, we remain grateful to those who are on the front lines of this effort, including our doctors, nurses, health professionals, public health authorities, and first responders. Many of them are taking no days off in helping us meet this challenge. We owe them a debt of gratitude.

Sincerely,

John Turner
State Representative
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