

**LETTER FROM MAYOR CHRIS RILEY
COVID-19 CRISIS –02/12/2021**

Dear Leon Valley Citizens and Businesses:

U.K. STRAIN OF COVID-19 VARIANT IN BEXAR COUNTY

Metro Health officials confirmed this week two cases of the U.K. strain of COVID-19 in Bexar County. Since January there have been 40 cases of the strain found in Texas. This strain is 30-40% more contagious, but is not more severe than the COVID-19 strain. The current vaccines are effective. It is recommended that we follow the same protocols to help protect us from getting this variant: wear a mask (CDC recommends two masks), social distance (6 ft) and wash your hands. There is no evidence of any other variant in the county besides the U.K. strain.

CURRENT CASE NUMBERS

As of February 11th, there were 186,346 total cases reported in Bexar County, a 4.3% increase in 7 days. There were 2,387 total deaths reported on February 11th (over the last two weeks), a 9.1% increase in 7 days.

The local positivity rate, the percentage of tested COVID cases which are positive, dropped from 11.4% last week to 9.7% this week (February 8th, 2021), declining for the 5th straight week. This is a good indicator that the virus spread **may** be coming down. When comparing last summer's surge with the winter surge, the highest number of hospitalizations in one day in

July, 2020 reached 1,267 vs. 1,570 in January, 2021. Metro Health officials are concerned that the Super Bowl, Rodeo, and upcoming spring break may cause the COVID-19 numbers to rise rather than continue to go down.

The risk indicator is now at **MODERATE** (down from severe). Metro Health has given the green light to schools to increase in person learning from Pre-K through elementary, but not to exceed 50% capacity. Mask wearing, social distancing and proper hygiene and ventilation are required.

UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL VACCINE DISTRIBUTION

George Hernandez, President of University Health System, reported to the suburban mayors that as of February 6, 2021, the number of people who have been vaccinated with one dose was 166,991. Additionally, there were 61,028 people who have been fully vaccinated (2 doses).

Crossroads/Wonderland Mall (lower level) is the primary location site for University Health Systems vaccinations. Currently vaccinations are only available to Phase 1A (health care workers) and Phase 1B (people over 65/over 16 with one underlying health issue). **You must have an appointment.** Please call 210-644-1960 or www.WeCanDoltSA.com.

There are no plans by the county to implement a centralized scheduling system or a drive-through facility. I know from experience how difficult it is to get through to either UHS, City of San Antonio (Dial 311 or (210) 207-

6000, Option 8) or other providers. As more doses of the vaccine become available, it should get easier to get through. Mr. Hernandez said they have been averaging 4,000 shots per day, but the goal is 5,000+ when more doses are available. He explained the Pfizer vaccine has five doses per vial, but UHS figured out by switching to a smaller/thinner syringe you can get 20% more vaccine from the original vial (and it is still as effective), thus vaccinating more people.

3.6 million people across the state have been vaccinated (1st dose) and 1 million have been fully vaccinated. Next week's allocation is 400,000 doses to the state agencies responsible for distribution of vaccines, plus 80,000 doses being distributed to 376 pharmacies across the state.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

- **FREE COVID -19 TESTING:** Now through April 30th. Drive thru at Dub Farris Athletic Complex, 8400 North Loop 1604W, San Antonio, TX. 78249. This is a state-supported test collection site operating at NO COST to the individual. You do NOT need symptoms to test and no insurance required. No appointment necessary. Test results will be available in 3 to 5 days after testing. Sponsored by Spartan Medical Call Center (888) 998-3568.

- **Call 211 for a referral to a local vaccine provider if you do not**

have internet access. Check out today's Leon Valley ENEWS for a list of vaccination sites in Bexar County.

- **South Texas Blood and Tissue Center** has a **critically low** supply of O negative blood on hand. **Last week 200 units of blood were needed and only 60 units were available.** Please consider donating blood to help this dire situation by calling (210) 731-5555, or call University Hospital at (210) 358-2812 to set up an appointment to give blood.

Wishing everyone a safe, warm weekend. *Keep following the basic protocols to help stop the virus from spreading.* Please call if you have any questions/comments.

Sincerely, Chris
(210) 618-2092 (cell)