



**NEWS RELEASE**

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## **Coronavirus update from The Woodlands Township (March 7, 2020)**

THE WOODLANDS, TEXAS (March 7, 2020) – As the Coronavirus (COVID-19) begins to surface in the Greater Houston Area, The Woodlands Township is taking preventative measures and is committed to keeping residents and businesses informed.

The Woodlands Township is working closely with public health and human services (Montgomery County Public Health District and Harris County Public Health District) on behalf of The Woodlands residents, businesses and visitors.

“The Woodlands Township, Directors and staff are working closely with all these organizations proactively implementing protocols for public spaces and in messaging to the community,” said Chairman Bunch.

Chairman Bunch participated in Friday’s Countywide Elected Officials and First Responders Coronavirus (COVID-19) update led by Montgomery County Public Health District and Montgomery County Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management. On Saturday, March 7, 2020, Chairman Bunch participated in a meeting with Texas Department of State Health Services alongside other local, county and state elected officials to discuss statewide COVID-19 recommendations, plans and protocols. This meeting was led by the Commissioner of Health, Dr. John Hellerstedt, who shared proactive preventative measures that communities, businesses and individuals should take to help reduce the spread of COVID-19 that would also reduce the spread of Influenza.

“We have taken steps at our public office buildings and recreational facilities to make sure we keep these areas wiped down with a high-grade disinfectant and multi-purpose cleaners including lavatories, counters, tables, workout equipment, chairs and other high touch point surfaces,” Bunch said. “We strongly encourage our businesses and residents to proactively implement the same precautionary measures.”

Late Friday evening, the Montgomery County Public Health District reported one case of possible COVID-19 in Montgomery County, as seen on KPRC in Houston. <https://www.click2houston.com/health/2020/03/05/man-woman-confirmed-to-be-first-cases-of-coronavirus-confirmed-in-harris-county/> A possible case is not a presumptive case or a confirmed case.

Chairman Bunch added, “A presumptive case means a patient tested positive at a state level lab and a confirmed case represents CDC confirming as positive. At this time, we have no known presumptive or confirmed cases involving residents of The Woodlands. Houston has a state level lab operating with a 24-hour turnaround time. We are not receiving the numbers of



COVID-19 tests administered and have been told the majority tested are negative for COVID-19 and that those patients had Influenza or a common cold.”

People that suspect they may have or have come in contact with someone COVID-19 positive are encouraged to stay home and work with medical officials from their home to coordinate monitoring or needed testing. Hospitals have special intake teams to coordinate accepting potential COVID-19 patients.

“The Woodlands Township will be notified if any of our residents are presumptive or confirmed to have COVID-19,” Chairman Bunch said.

Chairman Bunch added, “The Texas Department of State Health Services also confirmed cases are reported in the county of residency for the patient while treatments can be occurring in differing counties.”

“The Greater Houston Area and Montgomery County are blessed with world class medical facilities,” Bunch said. “Patients with symptoms of COVID-19, Influenza and other infectious diseases are being treated in these facilities that are equipped, trained and ready to adhere to treatment, testing and quarantine protocols.”

Bunch added, “We have learned the Houston Area confirmed cases are travel related with all confirmed individuals returning from the same Nile River Cruise in Egypt. Individuals that have had contact with these confirmed cases are being monitored by public health officials. Egypt has been added to the Travel Advisory along with China, Japan, Italy, Iran and South Korea. More regions will be added as needed.”

All Township operations and services are continuing to operate, including the Houston Livestock Show & Rodeo Shuttle on Township buses the first three weekends of March. The Township will continuously monitor and post updates.

“We urge our residents, business and visitors not be alarmed at the situation, but just be vigilant about best practices and have a plan to implement in the event The Woodlands is exposed to the virus,” Chairman Bunch said. “While we are hopeful the virus will soon be contained, it is always wise to be prepared.”

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## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

***What are the symptoms of COVID-19?***



Patients with COVID-19 have reportedly had mild to severe respiratory illness. Symptoms can include:

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath

At this time, CDC believes that symptoms of COVID-19 may appear in as few as 2 days or as long as 14 days after exposure. This is based on what has been seen previously as the incubation period of MERS coronaviruses.

***How can I prevent COVID-19?***

There is currently no vaccine to prevent COVID-19. The best way to prevent infection is to take precautions to avoid exposure to this virus, which are similar to the precautions you take to avoid the flu. DSHS always recommends these everyday actions to help prevent the spread of respiratory viruses, including:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.
- Follow the CDC's recommendations for using a facemask:
- The CDC does not recommend that people who are well wear a facemask to protect themselves from respiratory diseases, including COVID-19.
- Facemasks should be used by people who show symptoms of COVID-19 to help prevent the spread of the disease to others. The use of facemasks is also crucial for health workers and people who are taking care of someone in close settings (at home or in a health care facility).

Here are important links regarding the coronavirus:

Montgomery County Public Health District  
<https://mcphd-tx.org/>

Montgomery County Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management  
<https://mctxoem.org/>



Harris County Public Health District  
<http://www.hcphtx.org/Resources/2019-Novel-Coronavirus>

Harris County Office of Emergency Management  
<https://www.readyharris.org/>

Texas Department of State Health Services  
<https://www.dshs.texas.gov/coronavirus/>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

Conroe ISD  
<https://www.conroeisd.net/department/health-services/2019-novel-coronavirus/>

Tomball ISD  
[https://www.tomballisd.net/apps/pages/index.jsp?uREC\\_ID=307639&type=d&pREC\\_ID=1843043](https://www.tomballisd.net/apps/pages/index.jsp?uREC_ID=307639&type=d&pREC_ID=1843043)

Magnolia ISD  
[https://www.magnoliaisd.org/apps/pages/index.jsp?uREC\\_ID=256217&type=d&pREC\\_ID=1844196](https://www.magnoliaisd.org/apps/pages/index.jsp?uREC_ID=256217&type=d&pREC_ID=1844196)

For more information on The Woodlands Township, please call 281-210-3800 or visit  
[www.thewoodlandstownship-tx.gov](http://www.thewoodlandstownship-tx.gov).



## Texas COVID-19 Cases<sup>1</sup>

County of Residence <sup>2</sup>	Number of Cases <sup>3</sup>
Fort Bend	3
Harris	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>

<sup>1</sup>DSHS will update the state case count each day by 10 a.m. CT.

<sup>2</sup>Patient may be undergoing treatment in facilities in other counties

<sup>3</sup>Does not include repatriation cases.