

LETTER FROM MAYOR CHRIS RILEY ON COVID-19 CRISIS – 5/1/20

Dear Leon Valley Citizens and Businesses:

Bexar County Commissioners Court has allocated \$4million for a **Temporary Rental Assistance Measure** (TRAM) in response to COVID-19. The program will offer 1-3 months of rental assistance for residents in suburban cities and unincorporated areas in Bexar County. The criteria for qualifying is as follows:

1. Meet HUD established income limits for families earning 100% or below the Area Medium Income for a family of 4 (\$72,000); and
2. Show proof of unemployment (layoff, termination or furlough) or a material reduction of income due to COVID-19.

Beginning today at 10:00 am, the application will be posted at

<https://habctx.org/tram> or by calling (210) 940-1180.

We are ending week six since the federal and state government's declared an emergency pandemic. Governor Abbott's statewide stay-at-home order expired on April 30th. Judge Wolff signed an executive order, continuing until May 19th the Stay Home-Work Safe measures. All persons may leave their home only to engage in outdoor activity or to provide or obtain essential/reopened services.

Governor Abbott's Executive Order GA-18, which takes effect on Friday, May 1st, allows the following **Re-Opened** businesses (services):

a) In-store retail establishments; b) Dine in Restaurants; c) Movie theatres; d) Shopping Malls (food court and play areas remain closed); e) Museums and libraries (no interactive exhibits allowed). These places can only operate at 25% of their maximum capacity for the next two weeks under a phased-in plan. After that, if things are going well, the Governor said he will increase the limit to 50% occupancy.

Governor Abbott's executive order also prohibits the opening of bars, gyms, public swimming pools, interactive amusement venues, massage establishments, tattoo studios, piercing studios or cosmetology salons. The Governor said he would look at these businesses, along with summer camps, to reopen in the next phase. The decision will be made after data is collected to see how the COVID 19 numbers increased/decreased after this first re-open business plan began today.

The weekly conference call between County Judge Nelson Wolff representative and the Suburban Mayors was held on April 30, 2020. Until at least May 19, 2020, according to Gov. Abbott and Judge Wolff's orders:

- Public gatherings are prohibited.
- Face-Coverings should be worn by all people over the age of 10 when in a public place where it is difficult to keep six feet away from

other people in the store or when working next to co-workers (employers should provide). There are exceptions to wearing a face mask which include while exercising, driving alone or with passengers in the same car, pumping gas, or in a building or activity that requires surveillance or screening (banks). Residents must continue to maintain social distancing of at least 6 feet outside their residence. Gov. Abbott's executive order does not require masks (only encourages the use), thus locally there is no penalty if you choose not to wear one.

- Outdoor activity at parks is allowed under Gov. Abbott's order, limited to no more than 4 participants in the activity. Because of the difficulty to sanitizing and keeping the social distancing requirements, the following public and private recreational areas are closed: community and school playgrounds, outdoor exercise equipment, skate plazas, splash pads, basketball courts.
- Eviction and Foreclosure proceedings are suspended;
- Long Term Care facilities are closed to visitors.

Recommended Standards for Reopening

Dr. Juanita Woo from the San Antonio Metropolitan Health District discussed the recently released *Health Transition Report* from the county and city government's medical expert team on the criteria for re-opening businesses in the area. The criteria established were:

- 1) A sustained decline in the number of new COVID cases over 14 days;
- 2) Increase testing. Currently the testing sites have been under-utilized. The total number of possible tests per day is 1600, and there have been only 600 per day. Persons can only be tested if they have symptoms. The symptoms have been expanded beyond the fever, cough, shortness of breath to include sore throat, headache, chills, muscle weakness and loss of smell or taste.
- 3) Effective Contact Tracing capacity – adding personnel to trace who the infected COVID 19 person came in contact with so they can be tested and/or quarantined.
- 4) A prepared health care system that can care for all people.

Dr. Woo emphasized to remain cautious, stay at home, wear masks, practice social distancing, and hand washing practices. She did comment

that if the COVID 19 cases doubled within 24 hours that would be a sign to make changes to slow the spread down.

Testing sites available – Two additional drive-thru sites have been added: 1) **Texas MedClinic , 2530 SW Military Drive**, is open 7 days a week (9am – 5 pm). Call (210) 233-5970 between 8 am and 5 pm to schedule a free test. 2) **Walmart drive through location at 8923 W. Military Drive**, from 9 am to 4 pm, seven days per week. There is no out of pocket cost to the individual. Sign up for an appointment to be tested at www.DoINeedaCOVID19test.com. 3) **Joe Freeman Coliseum** drive through is open for testing (appointment required, call (210) 233-5970)).

- As of April 29, 2020, the total number of cases reported in Bexar County is 1,374 (up from 1167 as of April 23rd) with 48 deaths (up from 43 deaths on April 23rd).

HOW THE CORONAVIRUS SPREADS

“In a study at the University of Arizona researchers infected the metal door handle to an office building and found it took only about four hours for the [simulated] “virus” to spread through the entire building, infecting over half of employees and turning up on virtually every shared device like photocopiers and coffee machines. In the real world, such infections can stay active for up to three days.”

From: “The Body: A Guide for Occupants” By Bill Bryson (2019)

Our sincere THANKS and **APPRECIATION** to all the health care workers and first Responders, who continue to put their lives on the line to treat and save other lives during this emergency. Thanks also to all essential personnel who work at grocery stores, gas stations, exempted retail establishments and postal and transportation workers who are at risk to allow us to obtain essentials. Take care. Stay healthy, safe and remain positive!

Sincerely, Chris

(210) 618-2092 – Please call with any questions or concerns.