



FROM THE CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER

There is much we know about COVID-19.

We know it has had a devastating impact across our nation.

We know there is currently no vaccine to prevent COVID-19.

And we know the best way to prevent infection is to take steps to avoid exposure. We have seen this work in Texas, where Texans are taking actions to stop infections.

But there is much more to know.

Based on our current understanding, the virus that causes COVID-19 is thought to spread:

- Mainly from person to person;
- Between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet); and
- Via respiratory droplets when an infected person coughs or sneezes; these droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled.

People are thought to be most contagious early in their illness, but COVID-19 can be spread to others by infected persons even before they show any symptoms.

That is why we must remain cautious — to avoid further spread or a new outbreak.

As we begin to open Texas, we must continue to follow these critical health guidelines:

- **Stay home if you can.**
- **Wash hands often and for 20 seconds, or use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.**
- **Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue, then throw the tissue away.**
- **Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.**
- **Disinfect surfaces, buttons, handles, doorknobs, and other places touched often.**
- **Avoid close contact with people who are sick.**

Continue to practice social distancing, avoid crowds, and limit physical contact. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) also recommends using simple cloth face coverings in public to help slow the spread of the virus.

Special guidance for Texans over 65 is outlined on page 6, and for all Texans on page 8. Opening businesses have added responsibilities outlined beginning on page 19.

Every Texan is part of the solution. You can protect yourself, your family, and your community.

John William Hellerstedt, M.D., Chief Medical Officer
Commissioner, Texas Department of State Health Services