

June 20, 2020

Dear Fellow Citizens of Lampasas County,

This is Dr. Georgia Hay, your Local Health Authority, writing to give an update on the COVID-19 pandemic in our county. This has been a busy week for us and surrounding areas, which has prompted many questions that I'd like to try and answer today. I typically do give updates regularly to the radiogram and the Lampasas Dispatch Record. I also believe the radio station will have me back to give an update Friday morning July 3rd at 8 AM. Our county saw 10 new reported cases this week, 8 of which are active (still sick) and 1 of those is hospitalized in critical condition (as of yesterday). We have 12 recovered cases which for our county means I have contacted them and based on time and resolution of symptoms they are no longer contagious. Very few have gone back for repeat tests due to lack of availability, which is rapidly improving every day. The other reason for not going that route is many people will still have dead virus in the nose which can't get others sick but will still show up on the test. So even though they are over it, they will still potentially test positive. So as added precautions, I typically encourage wearing a face mask. We should all be doing that any time we cannot stay further than 6 feet away or are in any tight enclosed space. Wearing the masks will help reduce the spread in our community. It may not be pleasant or fashionable or popular, but we can adapt to the mild discomforts and help others by wearing one. It's not to protect you, it's to protect others from you in case you are shedding live virus with minimal symptoms (which happens a lot) or none but are going to get sick in the next 48 hours (which means you are already contagious). If we are wearing masks, groups are small, and there is not prolonged time exposed then we can reduce the chance of exposure, which may make the difference in being asked to quarantine or just wear a mask and monitor for symptoms.

I also wanted to address the information we release regarding the positive cases. I work with officials at the Department of State Health Services via Region 7 in Temple which helps these rural counties that don't have our own health department. They advise me on what information is safe to give out to help protect the identity of those affected. We need people to talk to us and share info so that we can make a difference in our community and prevent spread to vulnerable people. If they don't feel like their information is safe, then our community suffers. I understand larger counties are giving more information. It's a lot harder to know who any one is when the population is larger. For example, Burnet County has over 50,000. (They have also had a busy week with 40 new cases recorded this past week.) Lampasas County has a little over 21,000 people. Our county only spans 3 zip codes which correlates to the 3 cities in our county. I will tell you that we have had cases in all three and the new cases are about equally dispersed in all three areas/zip codes of the county. This virus can travel around the world in 6 months. I'm not sure any location is spared. We are all in this together. We have had 10 new cases this past week, and before we had 10 cases for a 3-month period, so we are in a stage with increasing virus in our community. I do believe that we can take care of each other to help keep the cases at a minimum. Wear masks, wash hands, avoid large gatherings, stay safe!