



Hidalgo County Commissioners Court

Richard F. Cortez
County Judge

David L. Fuentes
Commissioner, Precinct 1

Eduardo "Eddie" Cantu
Commissioner, Precinct 2

Joe M. Flores
Commissioner, Precinct 3

Ellie Torres
Commissioner, Precinct 4

OFFICE OF COUNTY JUDGE RICHARD F. CORTEZ

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NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tuesday, July 28, 2020

Hidalgo County statement regarding COVID-19 death totals

EDINBURG – A recent announcement by the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) regarding fatalities due to COVID-19 has shown a difference in the numbers reported by the state and Hidalgo County.

Hidalgo County Judge Richard F. Cortez and Health & Human Services Chief Administrative Officer Eddie Olivarez discussed the recent changes by DSHS and offer the following information:

As of Tuesday, July 28, 2020, Hidalgo County has reported 531 COVID-19 deaths due to complications related to COVID-19. Currently, the number of [deaths reported by DSHS](#) for Hidalgo County is 254 deaths.

As per the [Texas Department of State Health Services press release](#) posted on July 27, death certificates are being used to report fatalities by date of death. However, due to normal procedures and unique circumstances faced during this pandemic, delays in the issuance of death certificates by the Vital Statistics department may exist which is causing the difference in reporting of numbers by the state and county.

The state receives the death certificates from the Vital Statistics department and uses that data to count the deaths.

When COVID deaths are reported by Hidalgo County Health officials, it is through medical records sent by the hospital and health care providers to the county. Health officials review the information to verify that the resident died due to COVID-19 and assess if contributing factors, such as cardiovascular disease, morbid obesity, diabetes and pulmonary failure, may also be associated with the death.

Residents who die from unrelated causes, such as a car accident, but were COVID-19 positive at the time of the event are not counted towards the county's death totals. Residents from other counties who die in Hidalgo County hospitals are not counted in Hidalgo County deaths. They are counted in their respective county.

The announcement by DSHS was made without consulting Hidalgo County Health & Human Services. Hidalgo County reports deaths as they are reported to us, if we are advised to report the numbers in a different manner we will make the necessary changes.

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Hidalgo County is home to one of the fastest growing regions in the nation. We provide health and justice to the over 800,000 residents of our county. We strive to be accessible and responsive to our citizens by providing excellent public service through the values of leadership, transparency, fairness, collaboration, respect and fiscal responsibility. Follow our social media feed at www.co.hidalgo.tx.us/followus