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COUNTY OF TAYLOR
Abilene, Texas

Downing A. Bolls, Jr.
County Judge

November 3, 2020

**IMPORTANT CORRECTED NEWS RELEASE – IMMEDIATE
CORRECTION AND CLARIFICATION REQUESTED.**

**CORRECTION AND CLARIFICATION OF COVID-19 HOSPITALIZATION
NUMBERS: COVID-19 NUMBERS ADJUSTED FROM 16 PERCENT TO
8.2 PERCENT**

To the Citizens of Abilene and Taylor County:

On Monday, November 2, 2020, I publically released an advisory notifying citizens that Trauma Service Area “D”, which includes Abilene and Taylor County, had reached 16 percent as the percentage of Lab Confirmed COVID-19 hospitalizations out of total hospitalizations. I have learned this morning that the correct number is 8.2%; not 16 percent.

The numbers we use are provided by the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS). We retrieve it from an Excel spreadsheet which we were referred to back in September as part of Governor Abbott’s Executive Order GA-30, which re-opened the state to allow non-essential medical surgeries and procedures in Texas, except in some areas with high hospitalizations.

GA-32 defines an “area with high hospitalizations” as “any Trauma Service Area that has had seven consecutive days in which the number of COVID-19 hospitalized patients as a percentage of total hospital capacity exceeds 15 percent until such time as the Trauma Service Area has seven consecutive days in which the number of COVID-19 hospitalized patients as a percentage of total hospital capacity is 15 percent or less.”

In attempting to determine where to find our Trauma Service Area percentage of “COVID-19 hospitalized patients as a total hospital capacity”, we were directed to a tab labeled “Lab-Confirmed COVID-Hospitalizations out of Total Hospitalizations (%)” which

reflected a rate of 16% on Sunday and 16.6% on Monday. That percentage appeared to reflect the significant rise in COVID-19 numbers we have been seeing locally.

In our efforts to keep the public informed of where we were with regards to the numbers, I issued the advisory on Monday, which drew a quick response from Hendrick Medical Center as well as the news media who questioned conflicting figures and were inquiring as to where we were getting 16%. I explained that it came from the state.

In an effort to clarify, and if necessary correct any errors that may have occurred, I initiated an effort this morning to address those questions specifically. As you may be aware, the city and county work closely on our responses to COVID-19 and I received an email this morning from City Manager Robert Hanna explaining that they, too, were getting confusing information. In speaking with the DSHS, Mr. Hanna wrote that he had been referred to a different tab and where to find the correct number, which, as it turns out is 8.2 percent: not 16 percent!

I apologize personally for any confusion that may have resulted from our reporting information that was incorrect and have taken the steps necessary to correct and clarify the source for the correct numbers so that we will have no further confusion. I would like to further thank the media, hospital officials, and Mr. Hanna for bringing the discrepancy to our attention and getting it corrected. I can offer no other explanation than to say that these are very challenging times in which we live and the public should be able to trust what we are telling them is correct. I am inundated every day with numbers that often have no explanation or clarity. I assure you that when we are made aware of conflicting information, we will follow up and clarify; and, if necessary, correct that misinformation.

The corrected information is that the current Lab-Confirmed COVID-Hospitalizations out of Total Hospital Capacity stands at 8.2 percent; not 16 percent. That is well below the threshold of 15%, which averts the need to initiate changes.

DSHS Combined Hospital Data over Time by Trauma Service Area (TSA) numbers may be found at: <https://www.dshs.texas.gov/coronavirus/additionaldata/>



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