

# Van Zandt County



DON KIRKPATRICK  
COUNTY JUDGE

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March 28, 2020

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Second COVID-19 Related Death in East Texas**

**Van Zandt County, Texas (Saturday, March 28, 2020)** - NET Health has confirmed the second death in East Texas related to COVID-19. The individual is a 47-year-old female who resided in Van Zandt County and was hospitalized for treatment of COVID-19 symptoms

"The public has the responsibility, more than ever, to follow recommendations from health officials," says George Roberts, Chief Executive Officer of NET Health. "This is now a team sport. It is critical for everyone to play their part and to help us "flatten the curve" of COVID-19 having a devastating impact in East Texas."

If you have been exposed to a sick traveler, have been exposed to a person with COVID-19 in the last 14 days, or are experiencing fever, cough, or difficulty breathing, please contact your healthcare provider. More info about ways to slow disease transmission are maintained at <https://www.MyNETHealth.org/coronavirus>, <https://dshs.texas.gov/coronavirus>; or <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

**If you believe you have COVID-19 symptoms, please be sure to call before going to your doctor or emergency department to prevent any potential spread.**

Residents are reminded to take the same measures that are recommended to prevent the spread of the flu and other respiratory viruses. Everyone in East Texas should remember to:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Practice social distancing - Avoid close contact with people who are sick and stay home if you believe you have symptoms.
- Cover your cough or sneeze into the bend of your elbow or into a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects using a cleaning items that contain bleach.
- Follow all recommendations from your local health officials.

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March 29, 2020

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **2<sup>nd</sup> Confirmed Coronavirus Case in Van Zandt County**

**Canton, Texas (March 29, 2020)** – The Northeast Texas Public Health District has identified a 2<sup>nd</sup> positive case of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) in Van Zandt County. The test result was confirmed by the Public Health Lab of East Texas. This is a community spread case with exposure outside of Van Zandt County. The immediate risk of transmission in Van Zandt County remains low, as there is no evidence of community spread within the County at this time.

Human coronaviruses are most commonly spread through respiratory droplets. Symptoms include fever, cough and shortness of breath. People at higher risk for serious complications are those with underlying health conditions and with people over the age of 65. Health care providers and epidemiologists will remain in contact with this confirmed individual, as well as with anyone that interacted with this individual, if they believe they may be at risk of infection. Van Zandt County residents are reminded to take the same measures that are recommended annually to prevent the spread of the flu and other respiratory viruses. These include:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.

If you are experiencing fever, cough, or difficulty breathing, been exposed to a sick traveler or been exposed to a person with COVID-19 in the last 14 days, contact your healthcare provider.

**Be sure to call before going to your doctor or an emergency department to prevent any potential spread.**

General information regarding COVID-19 can be found at:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>;

<https://dshs.texas.gov/coronavirus>; or <https://www.mynethealth.org/coronavirus>

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March 30, 2020

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Update Regarding Coronavirus in Van Zandt County**

**(March 30, 2020)** – I, County Judge Don Kirkpatrick, convened top Van Zandt County officials in the County Court at Law Courtroom this afternoon, including, District Judge Chris Martin, County Court at Law Judge Joshua Winters, District Attorney Tonda Curry, Sheriff Dale Corbett, Commissioner Virgil Melton, Jr. and representatives of the Sheriff's Department and Emergency Management (a total of less than 10 people) to receive an update regarding the effect of coronavirus upon the County and discuss strategies to further combat the spread of this deadly virus.

Emergency management officials provided heartening information. As of this afternoon, **there still have been only two (2) confirmed cases of COVID-19** in Van Zandt County, with the immediate risk of transmission within the County remaining **LOW**. In addition, there continues to be no evidence of community spread within the County at this time. Officials attribute this positive news to significant efforts by citizens of this County to observe national and state orders and directives regarding social distancing, avoidance of groups of ten (10) people or more, and intentional practices of hand-washing and disinfecting.

Much discussion was had regarding "shelter-in-place" or "stay at home" orders adopted by other jurisdictions. Although it is clear that there are strong arguments and opinions throughout the county both for and against the adoption of a similar order, because the vast majority of Van Zandt County has been proactive about remaining home and doing what they can to avoid coming into contact with the virus and/or potentially spreading the same, and because confirmed cases of COVID-19 remain low, no such order was determined to be necessary at this time. Notwithstanding the same, I, County Judge Don Kirkpatrick, will likely be calling for an emergency hearing of the Commissioners within the next forty-eight (48) hours to amend the previously issued Disaster Declaration to add criminal penalties for persons who refuse to follow the necessary and binding state and federal mandates, including those who choose to proceed with large (greater than 10 person) social or entertainment-based gatherings. District Attorney Tonda Curry indicated her office would be vigorously prosecuting any such violations, with both Judges indicating that said cases would be quickly docketed before their Courts. Hopefully, with the public's continued cooperation, no "shelter-in-place" order will be required.

Further information will be forthcoming. A video press conference has been scheduled by county officials following the regular meeting of the Commissioners' Court on Wednesday, April 1, 2020. A link to view both meetings will be available, along with much other valuable information on the County's website: [www.vanzandtcounty.org](http://www.vanzandtcounty.org)