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Hood County COVID-19 Interim Update – March 8, 2021

As we continue to navigate through COVID-19, I want to give a quick perspective update, in conjunction with Jay Webster's most recent release (March 3, 2021).

CDC guidelines, Texas Department of State Health Services guidance, and my recommendations have not changed with Gov Abbott's updated Executive Order GA-34 from March 3rd.

The US and Texas remain under Public Health emergency orders, disaster declarations remain in effect and the COVID-19 pandemic has not ended.

I have not changed my assessment that we are still under substantial risk of COVID-19 transmission.

Local COVID hospitalizations have dropped, but we are still experiencing severe cases and deaths from COVID-19 complications. We still have over 150 active cases of COVID-19 in our county with dozens of new cases reported each week, and heroic local volunteer vaccination efforts over the past few weeks have resulted in over 7,000 vaccinations, ensuring that close to 10% of our county population has been vaccinated so far. This is a great start, but we still have a way to go with over 30,000 Hood County residents at risk of severe complications or death from COVID-19 infection.

I believe we are on the right track, and I support continued participation in work, school, government, church and safe return to social events with continued attention to minimum recommended health protocols to protect against COVID-19 and influenza at this time, as discussed in more detail on the Texas DSHS "Open Texas" web page. This includes continuing to focus on social distancing, wearing masks or recommended face coverings when social distancing is not possible, and good handwashing and sanitation efforts.

Thank you for all you are doing to keep our community safe and strong as we continue to weather this unprecedented event.

Texas DSHS "Open Texas" page:

<https://www.dshs.state.tx.us/coronavirus/opentexas.aspx>