

# GALVESTON COUNTY HEALTH DISTRICT

*Protecting and Promoting the Optimal Health and Well-Being of Galveston County*

**Ben G. Raimer, MD**  
Chair, United Board of Health

**Philip Keiser, MD**  
Local Health Authority



**Kathy Barroso, CPA**  
Chief Executive Officer

## NEWS RELEASE

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 18, 2020

**Media Contact:** Ashley Tompkins  
Director of Communications  
409-938-2211 (office)  
409-354-5501 (cell)  
atompkins@gchd.org

### **Galveston County Health District announces two additional COVID-19 cases**

GALVESTON COUNTY, Texas – Galveston County Health District (GCHD) today announces two additional positive COVID-19 cases in Galveston County residents. This brings the county’s case total to four.

GCHD will now only announce cases as positive as they are treated the same regardless of being presumptive or waiting confirmation.

The first individual is male in his 50s. He presented to his primary physician. He is currently self-quarantined in his home. The second individual is a female in her 40s. She presented at an area clinic. She is currently self-quarantined in her home.

Both have recently traveled within the United States, but it is unclear at this time if they were exposed via travel or community spread.

For confidentiality purposes, the health district is not releasing additional identifying information. GCHD is conducting epidemiological investigations and is working to quickly identify close contacts of both cases.

The health district does not comment on case specifics, including the person’s city of residence or what businesses they may have visited.

“We understand the announcement of two additional cases may concern our community, but as we’ve said, now that testing has increased, we can expect to see the number of positive cases in the county also increase,” said Dr. Philip Keiser, Galveston County local health authority.

“We continue to strongly encourage residents to follow guidelines from the CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention). There is evidence of community spread in Galveston County and staying home while practicing social distancing is the best way you can protect yourself and others.”

The CDC recommends avoiding gatherings of 10 people or more. This includes gatherings likely to include 10 or more people at high-risk for serious issues. People at higher risk include older adults and people who have chronic medical conditions such as lung and heart disease, as well as diabetes.

People at higher risk include older adults and people who have chronic medical conditions such as lung and heart disease, as well as diabetes.

-more-

“We do know social distancing helps reduce the risk of infection in the community the sooner you do it,” Keiser said. “We want people to think through the particulars of their event. Do you have participants who are in an extremely high-risk group? Think about what the risk is to you and the elderly and high-risk people you may be around. You may not be at a high risk, but who are you around when you leave? The elderly? Those with compromised immune systems? We really want people to focus on the particular risk. It’s not always tied to a particular number.”

There are steps you can take to keep you and your loved ones protected:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60 percent alcohol.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Stay home if you're sick.
- Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue and then throw the tissue in the trash. If tissues are not available, cough and sneeze in your elbow. Do not cough and sneeze in your hands.
- Frequently clean and disinfect objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.
- Get a flu shot. The flu vaccine does not offer protection against COVID-19, but it is also flu season.

For more information on COVID-19, visit [www.gchd.org/coronavirus](http://www.gchd.org/coronavirus). If you have questions about COVID-19, please call the GCHD information call center at 409.938.7221, option 1.

###

**Public Health Services · Coastal Health & Wellness · Emergency Medical Services · Animal Resource Center**

*The Galveston County Health District (GCHD) is the local public health agency for Galveston County, Texas.*

*GCHD provides services and programs that protect the everyday health and well-being of Galveston County.*

P.O. Box 939 La Marque, Texas 77568 • (409) 938-7221

**[www.gchd.org](http://www.gchd.org)**

