

Joint Statement of Bastrop County Health Authority and Judge
and the Mayors of the Cities of Bastrop, Elgin and Smithville

November 18, 2020

Ahead of the upcoming festivities, the leaders of each local government in Bastrop County, together with our Health Authority, Dr. Desmar Walkes, M.D., are joining their voices in a plea for public health and safety.

"We are in the ninth month of responding to the COVID-19 pandemic," said Dr. Walkes. "All are tired of this fight and want to get back to normal, especially around the holidays. However, the timing is not right to let down our guard. Wearing a mask and social distancing will make your family gathering safer and make the memories even more precious."

Judge Paul Pape added, "There is hope on the horizon for effective vaccines, but for now, we must remain vigilant. As families get together for the holidays, let's be situationally aware and cautious."

As of this week, Christine Files of the Office of Emergency Management reports 124 active cases in the County. That is a slight uptick since last week. Overall, since the pandemic began in March, there have been 2,127 cases reported in Bastrop County, with 33 deaths.

"Time with friends and family is paramount during the holiday season," said Scott Saunders, Mayor of Smithville. "Our desire to surround ourselves with people that we love is perhaps stronger now than at any other time of the year. When visiting with friends and family, please be as careful as possible. Here is a list of guidelines and ideas to help you celebrate the season safely: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/holidays.html>."

Connie Schroeder, Mayor of the City of Bastrop wrote, "As this historic year comes to an end, I appreciate the desire to spend time with friends and family. It is important that we continue to protect those that we love by being mindful of the advice from health experts. The City of Bastrop is blessed to have citizens who know how to stay safe and I'm confident they will continue their diligence during this holiday season."

The newly elected mayor of Elgin, Ron Ramirez, added, "The key to staying safe and healthy during this crisis is access to accurate and easily understood information and our commitment to following proper mask wearing, social distancing, and hand washing procedures. I know Elginites will do their part during these vital few months. Be safe. Be smart."

Two vaccines have completed initial trials and are being readied for release soon. They will go first to medical professionals and first responders. We expect that vaccines will become available in Bastrop County after the holidays.