



COMMUNICATION FROM THE JOINT INFORMATION CENTER

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Smith County meets “High Hospitalization” Threshold for Heightened Restrictions

#SpreadFactsNotFear

<http://www.nethealthcovid19.org/>

Tyler, Texas (Monday, Dec. 21)

The Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) reported that the 19 counties that comprise the Piney Woods Trauma Service Area (TSA-G) are now in an “area with high hospitalization,” as defined by [Governor Abbott’s Executive Order GA-32](#).

This designation as an “area with high hospitalization” means that additional restrictions, including limitations on capacity for restaurants and many business establishments, will be enforced for all counties within the TSA-G area. Under [GA-32](#), except for specifically excepted business establishments, businesses that were previously allowed to operate up to 75 percent of their total listed occupancy must now operate at no more than 50 percent of the total listed occupancy. Additionally, under [GA-32](#), people may not visit bars in “areas with high hospitalization” unless bars are allowed to continue operating drive-thru, pickup and delivery activities.

As Smith County Judge Nathaniel Moran awaits formal notification from the state, he reemphasized the need for individuals and businesses to remain diligent in the fight against the Coronavirus. “The number one way to guard against the increasing spread of the Coronavirus and to protect the community from additional restrictions from the state is to regulate our own behavior in a responsible way,” said Judge Moran.

“We should, as individuals, make the choices to wear a mask, avoid large crowds, keep our distance, wash our hands often, and stay home if we feel sick. By doing this, we can reduce the spread of COVID-19, protect our community, and regain additional liberties and opportunities for ourselves and our businesses.”

Trauma Service Area G includes the following counties: Anderson, Camp, Cherokee, Franklin, Freestone, Gregg, Harrison, Henderson, Houston, Marion, Panola, Rains, Rusk, Shelby, Smith, Trinity, Upshur, Van Zandt and Wood.

Under Governor Greg Abbott's Executive Order [GA-32](#), "areas with high hospitalization" is defined 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 exceed 15 percent...."

Business owners are encouraged to review the specific language of [Executive Order GA-32](#) to determine whether the more restrictive provisions of the Governor's Order for "areas with high hospitalization" apply to their business establishment or not. Questions regarding applicability of [GA-32](#) should be directed to the Office of the Governor, the Texas Department of State Health Services, or the appropriate section of the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation.

According to the [GA-32 Executive Order](#), the heightened restrictions imposed by Governor Abbott for "areas with high hospitalization" will only return to the original level of restrictions when "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."

Additional Resources:

For more information on GA-32 and its additional restrictions, as well as all of the Governor's Orders regarding COVID-19, visit <https://gov.texas.gov/>.

For more information on Trauma Service Area G and other information on regional COVID-19 data, visit <https://dshs.texas.gov/coronavirus/>.

For local COVID-19 information, visit <https://www.nethealthcovid19.org/>.

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The Joint Information Center

The Joint Information Center (J.I.C.) has been put in place as an information agency to best communicate with the public from a centralized location from agencies like the City of Tyler, Smith County and the Northeast Public Health District.