

LETTER FROM HEALTH AUTHORITY, DR. JOE ANZALDUA TO MAYOR CECIL WILLIS

Dear Mayor Willis,

I'm certain you are aware that Governor Abbott recently announced that's it's time to reopen Texas 100 percent. His new executive order rescinds most of his earlier executive orders. This executive order essentially lists the mask mandate in Texas. Effective 3/10/2021, it also increases the capacity for all businesses and facilities in the state to 100%. Businesses may still limit capacity and or implement additional safety protocols but at their own discretion. This order also rescinds most of Governor Abbott's previous executive orders related to COVID-19. According to the press release earlier this week, if COVID-19 hospitalizations in any of the 22 Hospital regions in Texas go over 15% of the hospital bed capacity in that region for 7 straight days, the county judge of that region may use COVID-19 mitigation strategies, but may not imposed any penalties of any kind due to failure of wearing a facemask. If the county judge does impose restrictions, those restrictions may not include reducing capacity to less than 50% for any type of entity.

In keeping with current CDC guidelines as well as recommendations from leading infectious disease experts and epidemiologists, I would recommend that individuals continue to practice preventive measures such as wearing a facemask, maintaining at least 6ft of physical distance from others and proper and frequent hand hygiene, until COVID-19 vaccines are more readily available and administered to the general population. Specifically, I would recommend that all persons, including staff, entering city facilities should still be required to wear a properly fitted face mask, covering mouth AND nose.

It is estimated that at least [75%](#) of Texans need to achieve immunity to COVID-19 to reach [herd immunity](#). As of March 1, only about 6.8% of the 29 million Texans have been fully vaccinated. Although there has been a significant decline in COVID-19 hospitalizations, the case count is still high. We must accept the fact that we are still in pandemic mode and as such should not be letting our guard down – not now. I believe we should continue all our mitigation strategies that are currently in place as we move to attain herd immunity, especially as more and more people get vaccinated. And this, no doubt, will happen!

Respectfully,

Joe A. Anzaldua, MD
Local Health Authority, City of Stafford, Texas